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THE WORKS OF

Sir Walter Scott

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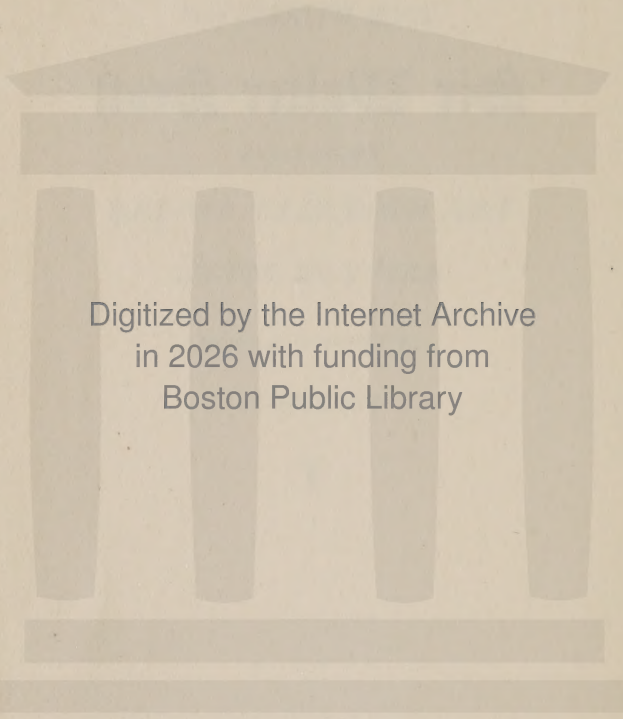
THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

AND THE POEMS

IN FIFTY VOLUMES

VOLUME VI





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THE ANTIQUARY
AND
THE BLACK DWARF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

VOLUME II



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Duel

THE ANTIQUARY
AND
THE BLACK DWARF

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT

VOLUME II



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

THE DUEL *Frontispiece*

From a drawing by Mr. Sidney Seymour Lucas. (See Volume I, page 265.)

AUCHMITHIE 102

The original of Mussel Crag. (See Notes on the Illustrations, Volume v.) This village, on the coast of Scotland, north of Arbroath, was visited by Scott several times prior to 1814, and is little, if any, changed since then. The house in the foreground was occupied by the grandfather of the present occupant, who is seen standing in the doorway. Nearly all of the houses in the village are so old that the present occupants do not know when they were built.

ARBROATH 174

This city, the original of Fairport, is very much improved since the time of the story, but the view from the sea wall of the old part of the town is very much as Scott saw it. The false alarm of the French invasion is partly drawn from an experience of Scott himself in another part of the country, partly from the fact that a French privateer, named the *Dreadnought*, once appeared in the Bay of Aberbrothock (or Arbroath) and proceeded to bombard the town, causing great excitement not only here but in the neighboring villages. (See note 4, on page 394.)

COTTAGE OF THE BLACK DWARF 194

This was the home of David Ritchie, who was the original of Elshender of Mucklestane Moor, commonly known as the Black Dwarf. His house was divided into two parts and he occupied the left side. The door, through which he could walk erect, was just three and a half feet high. His sister occupied the other half of the

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house. This building was put up for his use through the kindness of Sir James Nasmith, his landlord. It occupies the site of a hut which Ritchie built with his own hands and in which he lived many years.

GOLDIELANDS 278

This ancient peel is a familiar site to travellers on the main road leading south of Hawick. It was an ancient stronghold for border robbers such as the Reiver of Westburnflat.

VALE OF MANOR WATER 354

This sequestered spot is away from the main road and in the time of David Ritchie was seldom visited. The scene is in Peeblesshire at the mouth of the river Manor, near the dwelling of the black dwarf.

All of the illustrations in this volume are photogravures, and, except where otherwise stated, are from photographs taken specially for this edition.

THE ANTIQUARY

VOLUME II

THE ANTIQUARY

CHAPTER XXXI

Tell me not of it, friend. When the young weep,
Their tears are lukewarm brine; from our old eyes
Sorrow falls down like hail-drops of the North,
Chilling the furrows of our wither'd cheeks,
Cold as our hopes, and harden'd as our feeling.
Theirs, as they fall, sink sightless; ours recoil,
Heap the fair plain, and bleaken all before us.

Old Play.

THE Antiquary, being now alone, hastened his pace, which had been retarded by these various discussions and the *rencontre* which had closed them, and soon arrived before the half-dozen cottages at Mussel Crag. They now had, in addition to their usual squalid and uncomfortable appearance, the melancholy attributes of the house of mourning. The boats were all drawn up on the beach; and, though the day was fine and the season favourable, the chant which is used by the fishers when at sea was silent, as well as the prattle of the children, and the shrill song of the mother, as she sits mending her nets by the door. A few of the neighbours, some in their antique and well-saved suits of black, others in their ordinary clothes, but all bearing an expression of mournful sympathy with distress so sudden and unexpected, stood gathered around the door of Mucklebackit's cottage, waiting till 'the body was lifted.' As the Laird of Monk-barns approached they made way for him to enter, doffing their hats and bonnets as he passed with an air of

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melancholy courtesy, and he returned their salutes in the same manner.

In the inside of the cottage was a scene which our Wilkie alone could have painted, with that exquisite feeling of nature that characterises his enchanting productions.

The body was laid in its coffin within the wooden bedstead which the young fisher had occupied while alive. At a little distance stood the father, whose rugged, weather-beaten countenance, shaded by his grizzled hair, had faced many a stormy night and night-like day. He was apparently revolving his loss in his mind with that strong feeling of painful grief peculiar to harsh and rough characters, which almost breaks forth into hatred against the world and all that remain in it after the beloved object is withdrawn. The old man had made the most desperate efforts to save his son, and had only been withheld by main force from renewing them at a moment when, without the possibility of assisting the sufferer, he must himself have perished. All this apparently was boiling in his recollection. His glance was directed side-long towards the coffin, as to an object on which he could not steadfastly look, and yet from which he could not withdraw his eyes. His answers to the necessary questions which were occasionally put to him were brief, harsh, and almost fierce. His family had not yet dared to address to him a word, either of sympathy or consolation. His masculine wife, virago as she was, and absolute mistress of the family, as she justly boasted herself, on all ordinary occasions, was by this great loss terrified into silence and submission, and compelled to hide from her husband's observation the bursts of her female sor-

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row. As he had rejected food ever since the disaster had happened, not daring herself to approach him, she had that morning, with affectionate artifice, employed the youngest and favourite child to present her husband with some nourishment. His first action was to push it from him with an angry violence that frightened the child; his next to snatch up the boy and devour him with kisses. 'Ye'll be a bra' fallow, an ye be spared, Patie; but ye'll never — never can be — what he was to me! He has sailed the coble wi' me since he was ten years auld, and there wasna the like o' him drew a net betwixt this and Buchan Ness. They say folks maun submit; I will try.'

And he had been silent from that moment until compelled to answer the necessary questions we have already noticed. Such was the disconsolate state of the father.

In another corner of the cottage, her face covered by her apron, which was flung over it, sat the mother, the nature of her grief sufficiently indicated by the wringing of her hands and the convulsive agitation of the bosom which the covering could not conceal. Two of her gossips, officiously whispering into her ear the commonplace topic of resignation under irremediable misfortune, seemed as if they were endeavouring to stun the grief which they could not console.

The sorrow of the children was mingled with wonder at the preparations they beheld around them, and at the unusual display of wheaten bread and wine, which the poorest peasant or fisher offers to the guests on these mournful occasions; and thus their grief for their brother's death was almost already lost in admiration of the splendour of his funeral.

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But the figure of the old grandmother was the most remarkable of the sorrowing group. Seated on her accustomed chair, with her usual air of apathy and want of interest in what surrounded her, she seemed every now and then mechanically to resume the motion of twirling her spindle, then to look towards her bosom for the distaff, although both had been laid aside. She would then cast her eyes about as if surprised at missing the usual implements of her industry, and appear struck by the black colour of the gown in which they had dressed her, and embarrassed by the number of persons by whom she was surrounded; then, finally, she would raise her head with a ghastly look and fix her eyes upon the bed which contained the coffin of her grandson, as if she had at once, and for the first time, acquired sense to comprehend her inexpressible calamity. These alternate feelings of embarrassment, wonder, and grief seemed to succeed each other more than once upon her torpid features. But she spoke not a word, neither had she shed a tear; nor did one of the family understand, either from look or expression, to what extent she comprehended the uncommon bustle around her. Thus she sat among the funeral assembly like a connecting link between the surviving mourners and the dead corpse which they bewailed — a being in whom the light of existence was already obscured by the encroaching shadows of death.

When Oldbuck entered this house of mourning he was received by a general and silent inclination of the head, and, according to the fashion of Scotland on such occasions, wine and spirits and bread were offered round to the guests. Elspeth, as these refreshments were presented, surprised and startled the whole company by

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motioning to the person who bore them to stop; then, taking a glass in her hand, she rose up, and, as the smile of dotage played upon her shrivelled features, she pronounced, with a hollow and tremulous voice, 'wishing a' your healths, sirs, and often may we hae such merry meetings!'

All shrunk from the ominous pledge, and set down the untasted liquor with a degree of shuddering horror which will not surprise those who know how many superstitions are still common on such occasions among the Scottish vulgar. But as the old woman tasted the liquor she suddenly exclaimed with a sort of shriek, 'What's this? this is wine; how should there be wine in my son's house? Ay,' she continued with a suppressed groan, 'I mind the sorrowful cause now,' and, dropping the glass from her hand, she stood a moment gazing fixedly on the bed in which the coffin of her grandson was deposited, and then, sinking gradually into her seat, she covered her eyes and forehead with her withered and pallid hand.

At this moment the clergyman entered the cottage. Mr. Blattergowl, though a dreadful proser, particularly on the subject of augmentations, localities, teinds, and overtures in that session of the General Assembly to which, unfortunately for his auditors, he chanced one year to act as moderator, was nevertheless a good man, in the old Scottish Presbyterian phrase, God-ward and man-ward. No divine was more attentive in visiting the sick and afflicted, in catechising the youth, in instructing the ignorant, and in reproving the erring. And hence, notwithstanding impatience of his prolixity and prejudices, personal or professional, and notwithstanding, moreover, a certain habitual contempt for

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his understanding, especially on affairs of genius and taste, on which Blattergowl was apt to be diffuse, from his hope of one day fighting his way to a chair of rhetoric or *belles lettres* — notwithstanding, I say, all the prejudices excited against him by these circumstances, our friend the Antiquary looked with great regard and respect on the said Blattergowl, though I own he could seldom, even by his sense of decency and the remonstrances of his womankind, be ‘hounded out,’ as he called it, to hear him preach. But he regularly took shame to himself for his absence when Blattergowl came to Monkbarns to dinner, to which he was always invited of a Sunday, a mode of testifying his respect which the proprietor probably thought fully as agreeable to the clergyman, and rather more congenial to his own habits.

To return from a digression which can only serve to introduce the honest clergyman more particularly to our readers, Mr. Blattergowl had no sooner entered the hut and received the mute and melancholy salutations of the company whom it contained, than he edged himself towards the unfortunate father, and seemed to endeavour to slide in a few words of condolence or of consolation. But the old man was incapable as yet of receiving either; he nodded, however, gruffly, and shook the clergyman’s hand in acknowledgment of his good intentions, but was either unable or unwilling to make any verbal reply.

The minister next passed to the mother, moving along the floor as slowly, silently, and gradually as if he had been afraid that the ground would, like unsafe ice, break beneath his feet, or that the first echo of a footstep was to dissolve some magic spell and plunge the hut, with all its inmates, into a subterranean abyss. The tenor

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of what he had said to the poor woman could only be judged by her answers, as, half-stifled by sobs ill-repressed, and by the covering which she still kept over her countenance, she faintly answered at each pause in his speech, 'Yes, sir, yes! Ye're very gude! ye're very gude! Nae doubt, nae doubt! It 's our duty to submit! But, O dear, my poor Steenie, the pride o' my very heart, that was sae handsome and comely, and a help to his family, and a comfort to us a', and a pleasure to a' that lookit on him! O my bairn, my bairn, my bairn! what for is thou lying there, and eh! what for am I left to greet for ye?'

There was no contending with this burst of sorrow and natural affection. Oldbuck had repeated recourse to his snuffbox to conceal the tears which, despite his shrewd and caustic temper, were apt to start on such occasions. The female assistants whimpered, the men held their bonnets to their faces, and spoke apart with each other. The clergyman meantime addressed his ghostly consolation to the aged grandmother. At first she listened, or seemed to listen, to what he said with the apathy of her usual unconsciousness. But as, in pressing this theme, he approached so near to her ear that the sense of his words became distinctly intelligible to her, though unheard by those who stood more distant, her countenance at once assumed that stern and expressive cast which characterised her intervals of intelligence. She drew up her head and body, shook her head in a manner that showed at least impatience, if not scorn, of his counsel, and waved her hand slightly, but with a gesture so expressive as to indicate to all who witnessed it a marked and disdainful rejection of the

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ghostly consolation proffered to her. The minister stepped back as if repulsed, and, by lifting gently and dropping his hand, seemed to show at once wonder, sorrow, and compassion for her dreadful state of mind. The rest of the company sympathised, and a stifled whisper went through them, indicating how much her desperate and determined manner impressed them with awe and even horror.

In the meantime the funeral company was completed by the arrival of one or two persons who had been expected from Fairport. The wine and spirits again circulated, and the dumb show of greeting was anew interchanged. The grandame a second time took a glass in her hand, drank its contents, and exclaimed, with a sort of laugh — ‘Ha! ha! I hae tasted wine twice in ae day. Whan did I that before, think ye, cummers? Never since —’ And the transient glow vanishing from her countenance, she set the glass down and sunk upon the settle from whence she had risen to snatch at it.

As the general amazement subsided, Mr. Oldbuck, whose heart bled to witness what he considered as the errings of the enfeebled intellect struggling with the torpid chill of age and of sorrow, observed to the clergyman that it was time to proceed with the ceremony. The father was incapable of giving directions, but the nearest relation of the family made a sign to the carpenter, who in such cases goes through the duty of the undertaker, to proceed in his office. The creak of the screw-nails presently announced that the lid of the last mansion of mortality was in the act of being secured above its tenant. The last act which separates us for ever, even from the mortal relics of the person we assemble to mourn,

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has usually its effect upon the most indifferent, selfish, and hard-hearted. With a spirit of contradiction which we may be pardoned for esteeming narrow-minded, the fathers of the Scottish Kirk rejected, even on this most solemn occasion, the form of an address to the Divinity, lest they should be thought to give countenance to the rituals of Rome or of England. With much better and more liberal judgment, it is the present practice of most of the Scottish clergymen to seize this opportunity of offering a prayer and exhortation suitable to make an impression upon the living, while they are yet in the very presence of the relics of him whom they have but lately seen such as they themselves, and who now is such as they must in their time become. But this decent and praiseworthy practice was not adopted at the time of which I am treating, or at least Mr. Blattergowl did not act upon it, and the ceremony proceeded without any devotional exercise.

The coffin, covered with a pall and supported upon handspikes by the nearest relatives, now only waited the father to support the head, as is customary. Two or three of these privileged persons spoke to him, but he only answered by shaking his hand and his head in token of refusal. With better intention than judgment, the friends, who considered this as an act of duty on the part of the living and of decency towards the deceased, would have proceeded to enforce their request had not Oldbuck interfered between the distressed father and his well-meaning tormentors, and informed them that he himself, as landlord and master to the deceased, 'would carry his head to the grave.' In spite of the sorrowful occasion, the hearts of the relatives swelled within them at so

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marked a distinction on the part of the Laird; and old Ailison Breck, who was present among other fish-women, swore almost aloud, 'His honour Monkbarns should never want sax warp of oysters in the season (of which fish he was understood to be fond), if she should gang to sea and dredge for them hersell in the foulest wind that ever blew.' And such is the temper of the Scottish common people, that, by this instance of compliance with their customs and respect for their persons, Mr. Oldbuck gained more popularity than by all the sums which he had yearly distributed in the parish for purposes of private or general charity.

The sad procession now moved slowly forward, preceded by the beadles, or saulies, with their batons — miserable-looking old men tottering as if on the edge of that grave to which they were marshalling another, and clad, according to Scottish guise, with threadbare black coats and hunting-caps decorated with rusty crape. Monkbarns would probably have remonstrated against this superfluous expense had he been consulted; but in doing so he would have given more offence than he gained popularity by condescending to perform the office of chief mourner. Of this he was quite aware, and wisely withheld rebuke where rebuke and advice would have been equally unavailing. In truth, the Scottish peasantry are still infected with that rage for funeral ceremonial which once distinguished the grandees of the kingdom, so much that a sumptuary law was made by the Parliament of Scotland for the purpose of restraining it; and I have known many in the lowest stations who have denied themselves not merely the comforts, but almost the necessaries of life, in order to save such a sum

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of money as might enable their surviving friends to bury them like Christians, as they termed it; nor could their faithful executors be prevailed upon, though equally necessitous, to turn to the use and maintenance of the living the money vainly wasted upon the interment of the dead.

The procession to the churchyard, at about half a mile's distance, was made with the mournful solemnity usual on these occasions, the body was consigned to its parent earth, and, when the labour of the gravediggers had filled up the trench and covered it with fresh sod, Mr. Oldbuck, taking his hat off, saluted the assistants, who had stood by in melancholy silence, and with that adieu dispersed the mourners.

The clergyman offered our Antiquary his company to walk homeward; but Mr. Oldbuck had been so much struck with the deportment of the fisherman and his mother that, moved by compassion, and perhaps also, in some degree, by that curiosity which induces us to seek out even what gives us pain to witness, he preferred a solitary walk by the coast, for the purpose of again visiting the cottage as he passed.

CHAPTER XXXII

What is this secret sin, this untold tale,
That art cannot extract, nor penance cleanse?
 Her muscles hold their place,
Nor discomposed, nor form'd to steadiness,
No sudden flushing, and no faltering lip.

Mysterious Mother.

THE coffin had been borne from the place where it rested. The mourners, in regular gradation, according to their rank or their relationship to the deceased, had filed from the cottage, while the younger male children were led along to totter after the bier of their brother, and to view with wonder a ceremonial which they could hardly comprehend. The female gossips next rose to depart, and, with consideration for the situation of the parents, carried along with them the girls of the family, to give the unhappy pair time and opportunity to open their hearts to each other, and soften their grief by communicating it. But their kind intention was without effect. The last of them had darkened the entrance of the cottage as she went out, and drawn the door softly behind her, when the father, first ascertaining by a hasty glance that no stranger remained, started up, clasped his hands wildly above his head, uttered a cry of the despair which he had hitherto repressed, and, in all the impotent impatience of grief, half rushed, half staggered forward to the bed on which the coffin had been deposited, threw himself down upon it, and, smothering, as it were, his head among the bed-clothes, gave vent to the full passion of his sorrow. It was in vain that the wretched mother,

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terrified by the vehemence of her husband's affliction — affliction still more fearful as agitating a man of hardened manners and a robust frame — suppressed her own sobs and tears, and, pulling him by the skirts of his coat, implored him to rise and remember that, though one was removed, he had still a wife and children to comfort and support. The appeal came at too early a period of his anguish, and was totally unattended to; he continued to remain prostrate, indicating, by sobs so bitter and violent that they shook the bed and partition against which it rested, by clenched hands which grasped the bed-clothes, and by the vehement and convulsive motion of his legs, how deep and how terrible was the agony of a father's sorrow.

'O, what a day is this! what a day is this!' said the poor mother, her womanish affliction already exhausted by sobs and tears, and now almost lost in terror for the state in which she beheld her husband — 'O, what an hour is this! and naebody to help a poor lone woman. O, gudemither, could ye but speak a word to him! wad ye but bid him be comforted!'

To her astonishment, and even to the increase of her fear, her husband's mother heard and answered the appeal. She rose and walked across the floor without support, and without much apparent feebleness, and, standing by the bed on which her son had extended himself, she said, 'Rise up, my son, and sorrow not for him that is beyond sin and sorrow and temptation. Sorrow is for those that remain in this vale of sorrow and darkness. I, wha dinna sorrow, and wha canna sorrow for ony ane, hae maist need that ye should a' sorrow for me.'

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The voice of his mother, not heard for years as taking part in the active duties of life, or offering advice or consolation, produced its effect upon her son. He assumed a sitting posture on the side of the bed, and his appearance, attitude, and gestures changed from those of angry despair to deep grief and dejection. The grandmother retired to her nook, the mother mechanically took in her hand her tattered Bible, and seemed to read, though her eyes were drowned with tears.

They were thus occupied when a loud knock was heard at the door.

‘Hegh, sirs!’ said the poor mother, ‘wha is it that can be coming in that gait e’enow? They canna hae heard o’ our misfortune, I’m sure.’

The knock being repeated, she rose and opened the door, saying querulously, ‘Whatna gait’s that to disturb a sorrowfu’ house?’

A tall man in black stood before her, whom she instantly recognised to be Lord Glenallan.

‘Is there not,’ he said, ‘an old woman lodging in this or one of the neighbouring cottages, called Elspeth, who was long resident at Craighburnfoot of Glenallan?’

‘It’s my gudemither, my lord,’ said Margaret; ‘but she canna see ony body e’enow. Ohon! we’re dreeing a sair weird; we hae had a heavy dispensation!’

‘God forbid,’ said Lord Glenallan, ‘that I should on light occasion disturb your sorrow; but my days are numbered, your mother-in-law is in the extremity of age, and, if I see her not to-day, we may never meet on this side of time.’

‘And what,’ answered the desolate mother, ‘wad ye see at an auld woman, broken down wi’ age and sorrow

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and heartbreak? Gentle or simple shall not darken my doors the day my bairn's been carried out a corpse.'

While she spoke thus, indulging the natural irritability of disposition and profession, which began to mingle itself in some degree with her grief when its first uncontrolled bursts were gone by, she held the door about one-third part open, and placed herself in the gap, as if to render the visitor's entrance impossible. But the voice of her husband was heard from within — 'Wha's that, Maggie? what for are ye steeking them out? Let them come in; it doesna signify an auld rope's end wha comes in or wha gaes out o' this house frae this time forward.'

The woman stood aside at her husband's command, and permitted Lord Glenallan to enter the hut. The dejection exhibited in his broken frame and emaciated countenance formed a strong contrast with the effects of grief as they were displayed in the rude and weather-beaten visage of the fisherman and the masculine features of his wife. He approached the old woman as she was seated on her usual settle, and asked her, in a tone as audible as his voice could make it, 'Are you Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot of Glenallan?'

'Wha is it that asks about the unhallowed residence of that evil woman?' was the answer returned to his query.

'The unhappy Earl of Glenallan.'

'Earl — Earl of Glenallan!'

'He who was called William Lord Geraldin,' said the Earl, 'and whom his mother's death has made Earl of Glenallan.'

'Open the bole,' said the old woman firmly and hastily to her daughter-in-law — 'open the bole wi' speed, that

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I may see if this be the right Lord Geraldin, the son of my mistress, him that I received in my arms within the hour after he was born, him that has reason to curse me that I didna smother him before the hour was past!’

The window, which had been shut in order that a gloomy twilight might add to the solemnity of the funeral meeting, was opened as she commanded, and threw a sudden and strong light through the smoky and misty atmosphere of the stifling cabin. Falling in a stream upon the chimney, the rays illuminated, in the way that Rembrandt would have chosen, the features of the unfortunate nobleman and those of the old sibyl, who now, standing upon her feet and holding him by one hand, peered anxiously in his features with her light blue eyes, and, holding her long and withered forefinger within a small distance of his face, moved it slowly as if to trace the outlines, and reconcile what she recollected with that she now beheld. As she finished her scrutiny, she said, with a deep sigh, ‘It’s a sair, sair change; and wha’s fault is it? but that’s written down where it will be remembered — it’s written on tablets of brass with a pen of steel, where all is recorded that is done in the flesh. And what,’ she said, after a pause — ‘what is Lord Geraldin seeking from a puir auld creature like me, that’s dead already, and only belongs sae far to the living that she isna yet laid in the moulds?’

‘Nay,’ answered Lord Glenallan, ‘in the name of Heaven, why was it that you requested so urgently to see me? and why did you back your request by sending a token which you knew well I dared not refuse?’

As he spoke thus, he took from his purse the ring which Edie Ochiltree had delivered to him at Glenallan

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House. The sight of this token produced a strange and instantaneous effect upon the old woman. The palsy of fear was immediately added to that of age, and she began instantly to search her pockets with the tremulous and hasty agitation of one who becomes first apprehensive of having lost something of great importance; then, as if convinced of the reality of her fears, she turned to the Earl, and demanded, 'And how came ye by it then? how came ye by it? I thought I had kept it sae securely. What will the Countess say?'

'You know,' said the Earl — 'at least you must have heard, that my mother is dead.'

'Dead! are ye no imposing upon me? Has she left a' at last — lands and lordship and lineages?'

'All, all,' said the Earl, 'as mortals must leave all human vanities.'

'I mind now,' answered Elspeth, 'I heard of it before; but there has been sic distress in our house since, and my memory is sae muckle impaired. But ye are sure your mother, the Lady Countess, is gane hame?'

The Earl again assured her that her former mistress was no more.

'Then,' said Elspeth, 'it shall burden my mind nae langer! When she lived, wha dared to speak what it would hae displeased her to hae had noised abroad? But she's gane, and I will confess all.'

Then, turning to her son and daughter-in-law, she commanded them imperatively to quit the house, and leave Lord Geraldin (for so she still called him) alone with her. But Maggie Mucklebackit, her first burst of grief being over, was by no means disposed in her own house to pay passive obedience to the commands of her mother-in-

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law, an authority which is peculiarly obnoxious to persons in her rank of life, and which she was the more astonished at hearing revived, when it seemed to have been so long relinquished and forgotten.

‘It was an unco thing,’ she said, in a grumbling tone of voice, for the rank of Lord Glenallan was somewhat imposing — ‘It was an unco thing to bid a mother leave her ain house wi’ the tear in her ee, the moment her eldest son had been carried a corpse out at the door o’t.’

The fisherman, in a stubborn and sullen tone, added to the same purpose — ‘This is nae day for your auld-warld stories, mother. My lord, if he be a lord, may ca’ some other day, or he may speak out what he has gotten to say if he likes it. There’s nane here will think it worth their while to listen to him or you either. But neither for laird or loon, gentle or semple, will I leave my ain house to pleasure ony body on the very day my poor —’

Here his voice choked and he could proceed no farther; but as he had risen when Lord Glenallan came in, and had since remained standing, he now threw himself doggedly upon a seat, and remained in the sullen posture of one who was determined to keep his word.

But the old woman, whom this crisis seemed to repossess in all those powers of mental superiority with which she had once been eminently gifted, arose, and, advancing towards him, said with a solemn voice, ‘My son, as ye wad shun hearing of your mother’s shame, as ye wad not willingly be a witness of her guilt, as ye wad deserve her blessing and avoid her curse, I charge ye, by the body that bore and that nursed ye, to leave me at freedom to speak with Lord Geraldin what nae mortal ears but his ain maun listen to. Obey my words, that when

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ye lay the moulds on my head — and O, that the day were come! — ye may remember this hour without the reproach of having disobeyed the last earthly command that ever your mother wared on you.'

The terms of this solemn charge revived in the fisherman's heart the habit of instinctive obedience in which his mother had trained him up, and to which he had submitted implicitly while her powers of exacting it remained entire. The recollection mingled also with the prevailing passion of the moment; for, glancing his eye at the bed on which the dead body had been laid, he muttered to himself, '*He* never disobeyed *me*, in reason or out o' reason, and what for should I vex *her*?' Then taking his reluctant spouse by the arm, he led her gently out of the cottage and latched the door behind them as he left it.

As the unhappy parents withdrew, Lord Glenallan, to prevent the old woman from relapsing into her lethargy, again pressed her on the subject of the communication which she proposed to make to him.

'Ye will have it sune eneugh,' she replied; 'my mind's clear eneugh now, and there is not — I think there is not — a chance of my forgetting what I have to say. My dwelling at Craighburnfoot is before my een, as it were present in reality — the green bank, with its selvidge, just where the burn met wi' the sea; the twa little barks, wi' their sails furled, lying in the natural cove which it formed; the high cliff that joined it with the pleasure-grounds of the house of Glenallan, and hung right ower the stream. Ah! yes, I may forget that I had a husband and have lost him, that I hae but ane alive of our four fair sons, that misfortune upon misfortune has devoured

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our ill-gotten wealth, that they carried the corpse of my son's eldest-born frae the house this morning; but I never can forget the days I spent at bonny Craighburn-foot!

'You were a favourite of my mother,' said Lord Glenallan, desirous to bring her back to the point, from which she was wandering.

'I was — I was; ye needna mind me o' that. She brought me up abune my station, and wi' knowledge mair than my fellows; but, like the tempter of auld, wi' the knowledge of gude she taught me the knowledge of evil.'

'For God's sake, Elspeth,' said the astonished Earl, 'proceed, if you can, to explain the dreadful hints you have thrown out! I well know you are confidant to one dreadful secret, which should split this roof even to hear it named; but speak on farther.'

'I will,' she said — 'I will; just bear wi' me for a little'; and again she seemed lost in recollection, but it was no longer tinged with imbecility or apathy. She was now entering upon the topic which had long loaded her mind, and which doubtless often occupied her whole soul at times when she seemed dead to all around her. And I may add as a remarkable fact, that such was the intense operation of mental energy upon her physical powers and nervous system, that, notwithstanding her infirmity of deafness, each word that Lord Glenallan spoke during this remarkable conference, although in the lowest tone of horror or agony, fell as full and distinct upon Elspeth's ear as it could have done at any period of her life. She spoke also herself clearly, distinctly, and slowly, as if anxious that the intelligence she communicated should

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be fully understood — concisely at the same time, and with none of the verbiage or circumlocutory additions natural to those of her sex and condition. In short, her language bespoke a better education, as well as an uncommonly firm and resolved mind, and a character of that sort from which great virtues or great crimes may be naturally expected. The tenor of her communication is disclosed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Remorse — she ne'er forsakes us.
A bloodhound stanch, she tracks our rapid step
Through the wild labyrinth of youthful frenzy,
Unheard, perchance, until old age hath tamed us;
Then in our lair, when Time hath chill'd our joints,
And maim'd our hope of combat, or of flight,
We hear her deep-mouth'd bay, announcing all
Of wrath and woe and punishment that bides us.

Old Play.

'I NEED not tell you,' said the old woman, addressing the Earl of Glenallan, 'that I was the favourite and confidential attendant of Joscelind, Countess of Glenallan, whom God assoilzie! (here she crossed herself) and I think, farther, ye may not have forgotten that I shared her regard for mony years. I returned it by the maist sincere attachment, but I fell into disgrace frae a trifling act of disobedience, reported to your mother by ane that thought — and she wasna wrang — that I was a spy upon her actions and yours.'

'I charge thee, woman,' said the Earl, in a voice trembling with passion, 'name not her name in my hearing!'

'I MUST,' returned the penitent firmly and calmly, 'or how can you understand me?'

The Earl leaned upon one of the wooden chairs of the hut, drew his hat over his face, clenched his hands together, set his teeth like one who summons up courage to undergo a painful operation, and made a signal to her to proceed.

'I say then,' she resumed, 'that my disgrace with my mistress was chiefly owing to Miss Eveline Neville, then

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bred up in Glenallan House as the daughter of a cousin-german and intimate friend of your father that was gane. There was muckle mystery in her history, but wha dared to inquire farther than the Countess liked to tell? All in Glenallan House loved Miss Neville — all but twa, your mother and mysell; we baith hated her.'

'God! for what reason, since a creature so mild, so gentle, so formed to inspire affection never walked on this wretched world?'

'It may hae been sae,' rejoined Elspeth, 'but your mother hated a' that cam of your father's family — a' but himsell. Her reasons related to strife which fell between them soon after her marriage; the particulars are naething to this purpose. But O, doubly did she hate Eveline Neville when she perceived that there was a growing kindness atween you and that unfortunate young leddy! Ye may mind that the Countess's dislike didna gang farther at first than just showing o' the cauld shouther — at least it wasna seen farther; but at the lang run it brak out into such downright violence that Miss Neville was even fain to seek refuge at Knockwinnock Castle with Sir Arthur's leddy, wha — God sain her! — was then wi' the living.'

'You rend my heart by recalling these particulars. But go on, and may my present agony be accepted as additional penance for the involuntary crime!'

'She had been absent some months,' continued Elspeth, 'when I was ae night watching in my hut the return of my husband from fishing, and shedding in private those bitter tears that my proud spirit wrung frae me whenever I thought on my disgrace. The sneck was drawn, and the Countess, your mother, entered my

dwelling. I thought I had seen a spectre, for, even in the height of my favour, this was an honour she had never done me, and she looked as pale and ghastly as if she had risen from the grave. She sate down and wrung the draps from her hair and cloak, for the night was drizzling, and her walk had been through the plantations, that were a' loaded with dew. I only mention these things that you may understand how weel that night lives in my memory, — and weel it may. I was surprised to see her, but I durstna speak first, mair than if I had seen a phantom. Na, I durst not, my lord, I that hae seen mony sights of terror, and never shook at them. Sae, after a silence, she said, "Elspeth Cheyne" — for she always gave me my maiden name — "are not ye the daughter of that Reginald Cheyne who died to save his master, Lord Glenallan, on the field of Sheriffmuir?" And I answered her as proudly as hersell nearly — "As sure as you are the daughter of that Earl of Glenallan whom my father saved that day by his own death."

Here she made a deep pause.

'And what followed? what followed? For Heaven's sake, good woman — But why should I use that word? Yet, good or bad, I command you to tell me.'

'And little I should value earthly command,' answered Elspeth, 'were there not a voice that has spoken to me sleeping and waking, that drives me forward to tell this sad tale. Aweel, my lord, the Countess said to me, "My son loves Eveline Neville; they are agreed, they are plighted. Should they have a son my right over Glenallan merges: I sink from that moment from a Countess into a miserable stipendiary dowager; I, who brought lands and vassals, and high blood and ancient fame to

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my husband, I must cease to be mistress when my son has an heir-male. But I care not for that; had he married any but one of the hated Nevilles, I had been patient. But for them — that they and their descendants should enjoy the right and honours of my ancestors goes through my heart like a two-edged dirk. And this girl — I detest her!” And I answered, for my heart kindled at her words, that her hate was equalled by mine.’

‘Wretch!’ exclaimed the Earl, in spite of his determination to preserve silence — ‘wretched woman! what cause of hate could have arisen from a being so innocent and gentle?’

‘I hated what my mistress hated, as was the use with the liege vassals of the house of Glenallan; for though, my lord, I married under my degree, yet an ancestor of yours never went to the field of battle but an ancestor of the frail, demented, auld, useless wretch wha now speaks with you carried his shield before him. But that was not a’,’ continued the beldam, her earthly and evil passions rekindling as she became heated in her narration — ‘that was not a’; I hated Miss Eveline Neville for her ain sake. I brought her frae England, and during our whole journey she gecked and scorned at my northern speech and habit, as her southland leddies and kimmers had done at the boarding-school, as they ca’d it (and, strange as it may seem, she spoke of an affront offered by a heedless school-girl without intention with a degree of inveteracy which, at such a distance of time, a mortal offence would neither have authorised or excited in any well-constituted mind). Yes, she scorned and jested at me; but let them that scorn the tartan fear the dirk!’

She paused, and then went on. ‘But I deny not that

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I hated her mair than she deserved. My mistress, the Countess, persevered and said, "Elspeth Cheyne, this unruly boy will marry with the false English blood. Were days as they have been, I could throw her into the massymore of Glenallan, and fetter him in the keep of Strathbonnel. But these times are past, and the authority which the nobles of the land should exercise is delegated to quibbling lawyers and their baser dependents. Hear me, Elspeth Cheyne! If you are your father's daughter as I am mine, I will find means that they shall not marry. She walks often to that cliff that overhangs your dwelling to look for her lover's boat" — ye may remember the pleasure ye then took on the sea, my lord — "let him find her forty fathom lower than he expects!" Yes! ye may stare and frown and clench your hand, but, as sure as I am to face the only Being I ever feared — and O that I had feared Him mair! — these were your mother's words. What avails it to me to lie to you? But I wadna consent to stain my hand with blood. Then she said, "By the religion of our holy Church they are ower sib thegither. But I expect nothing but that both will become heretics as well as disobedient reprobates," that was her addition to that argument. And then, as the fiend is ever ower busy wi' brains like mine, that are subtle beyond their use and station, I was unhappily permitted to add — "But they might be brought to think themselves sae sib as no Christian law will permit their wedlock."

Here the Earl of Glenallan echoed her words with a shriek so piercing as almost to rend the roof of the cottage — 'Ah! then Eveline Neville was not the — the —'

'The daughter, ye would say, of your father?' con-

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tinued Elspeth. 'No; be it a torment or be it a comfort to you, ken the truth, she was nae mair a daughter of your father's house than I am.'

'Woman, deceive me not; make me not curse the memory of the parent I have so lately laid in the grave, for sharing in a plot the most cruel, the most infernal —'

'Bethink ye, my Lord Geraldin, ere ye curse the memory of a parent that's gane, is there none of the blood of Glenallan living whose faults have led to this dreadful catastrophe?'

'Mean you my brother? he too is gone,' said the Earl.

'No,' replied the sibyl, 'I mean yoursell, Lord Geraldin. Had you not transgressed the obedience of a son by wedding Eveline Neville in secret while a guest at Knockwinnock, our plot might have separated you for a time, but would have left at least your sorrows without remorse to canker them. But your ain conduct had put poison in the weapon that we threw, and it pierced you with the mair force because ye cam rushing to meet it. Had your marriage been a proclaimed and acknowledged action, our stratagem to throw an obstacle into your way that couldna be got ower neither wad nor could hae been practised against ye.'

'Great Heaven!' said the unfortunate nobleman, 'it is as if a film fell from my obscured eyes! Yes, I now well understand the doubtful hints of consolation thrown out by my wretched mother, tending indirectly to impeach the evidence of the horrors of which her arts had led me to believe myself guilty.'

'She could not speak mair plainly,' answered Elspeth, 'without confessing her ain fraud, and she would have submitted to be torn by wild horses rather than unfold

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what she had done; and, if she had still lived, so would I for her sake. They were stout hearts the race of Glenallan, male and female, and sae were a' that in auld times cried their gathering-word of "Clochnaben"; they stood shouter to shouter. Nae man parted frae his chief for love of gold or of gain, or of right or of wrang. The times are changed, I hear now.'

The unfortunate nobleman was too much wrapped up in his own confused and distracting reflections to notice the rude expressions of savage fidelity, in which, even in the latest ebb of life, the unhappy author of his misfortunes seemed to find a stern and stubborn source of consolation.

'Great Heaven!' he exclaimed, 'I am then free from a guilt the most horrible with which man can be stained, and the sense of which, however involuntary, has wrecked my peace, destroyed my health, and bowed me down to an untimely grave. Accept,' he fervently uttered, lifting his eyes upwards — 'accept my humble thanks! If I live miserable, at least I shall not die stained with that unnatural guilt! And thou, proceed, if thou hast more to tell — proceed, while thou hast voice to speak it and I have powers to listen.'

'Yes,' answered the beldam, 'the hour when you shall hear and I shall speak is indeed passing rapidly away. Death has crossed your brow with his finger, and I find his grasp turning every day caulder at my heart. Interrupt me nae mair with exclamations and groans and accusations, but hear my tale to an end! And then — if ye be indeed sic a Lord of Glenallan as I hae heard of in *my* day — make your merrymen gather the thorn, and the brier, and the green hollin, till they heap them as high as

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the house-riggin', and burn — burn — burn the auld witch Elspeth, and a' that can put ye in mind that sic a creature ever crawled upon the land!'

'Go on,' said the Earl — 'go on; I will not again interrupt you.'

He spoke in a half-suffocated yet determined voice, resolved that no irritability on his part should deprive him of this opportunity of acquiring proofs of the wonderful tale he then heard. But Elspeth had become exhausted by a continuous narration of such unusual length; the subsequent part of her story was more broken, and, though still distinctly intelligible in most parts, had no longer the lucid conciseness which the first part of her narrative had displayed to such an astonishing degree. Lord Glenallan found it necessary, when she had made some attempts to continue her narrative without success, to prompt her memory, by demanding what proofs she could propose to bring of the truth of a narrative so different from that which she had originally told.

'The evidence,' she replied, 'of Eveline Neville's real birth was in the Countess's possession, with reasons for its being for some time kept private. They may yet be found, if she has not destroyed them, in the left-hand drawer of the ebony cabinet that stood in the dressing-room; these she meant to suppress for the time, until you went abroad again, when she trusted, before your return, to send Miss Neville back to her ain country or to get her settled in marriage.'

'But did you not show me letters of my father's which seemed to me, unless my senses altogether failed me in that horrible moment, to avow his relationship to — to the unhappy —'

‘We did; and, with my testimony, how could you doubt the fact, or her either? But we suppressed the true explanation of these letters, and that was, that your father thought it right the young leddy should pass for his daughter for a while, on account o’ some family reasons that were amang them.’

‘But wherefore, when you learned our union, was this dreadful artifice persisted in?’

‘It wasna,’ she replied, ‘till Lady Glenallan had communicated this fause tale that she suspected ye had actually made a marriage; nor even then did you avow it sae as to satisfy her whether the ceremony had in verity passed atween ye or no. But ye remember — O ye canna but remember—weel what passed in that awfu’ meeting!’

‘Woman! you swore upon the Gospels to the fact which you now disavow.’

‘I did, and I wad hae taen a yet mair holy pledge on it, if there had been ane; I wad not hae spared the blood of my body or the guilt of my soul to serve the house of Glenallan.’

‘Wretch! do you call that horrid perjury, attended with consequences yet more dreadful — do you esteem that a service to the house of your benefactors?’

‘I served her wha was then the head of Glenallan as she required me to serve her. The cause was between God and her conscience, the manner between God and mine. She is gane to her account, and I maun follow. Have I tauld ye a’?’

‘No,’ answered Lord Glenallan; ‘you have yet more to tell: you have to tell me of the death of the angel whom your perjury drove to despair, stained, as she thought herself, with a crime so horrible. Speak truth: was that

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dreadful — was that horrible incident,' he could scarcely articulate the words — 'was it as reported? or was it an act of yet further, though not more atrocious, cruelty inflicted by others?'

'I understand you,' said Elspeth; 'but report spoke truth: our false witness was indeed the cause, but the deed was her ain distracted act. On that fearfu' disclosure, when ye rushed frae the Countess's presence and saddled your horse and left the castle like a fire-flaught, the Countess hadna yet discovered your private marriage; she hadna fund out that the union, which she had framed this awfu' tale to prevent, had e'en taen place. Ye fled from the house as if the fire o' Heaven was about to fa' upon it, and Miss Neville, atween reason and the want o't, was put under sure ward. But the ward sleep't and the prisoner waked, the window was open, the way was before her, there was the cliff, and there was the sea! O, when will I forget that!'

'And thus died,' said the Earl, 'even so as was reported?'

'No, my lord. I had gane out to the cove; the tide was in, and it flowed, as ye'll remember, to the foot of that cliff; it was a great convenience that for my husband's trade. Where am I wandering? I saw a white object dart frae the tap o' the cliff like a sea-maw through the mist, and then a heavy flash and sparkle of the waters showed me it was a human creature that had fa'en into the waves. I was bold and strong, and familiar with the tide. I rushed in and grasped her gown, and drew her out and carried her on my shouthers — I could hae carried twa sic then — carried her to my hut, and laid her on my bed. Neighbours cam and brought help; but the words

she uttered in her ravings, when she got back the use of speech, were such that I was fain to send them awa, and get up word to Glenallan House. The Countess sent down her Spanish servant Teresa — if ever there was a fiend on earth in human form that woman was ane. She and I were to watch the unhappy leddy, and let no other person approach. God knows what Teresa's part was to hae been: she tauld it not to me; but Heaven took the conclusion in its ain hand. The poor leddy! she took the pangs of travail before her time, bore a male child, and died in the arms of me — of her mortal enemy! Ay, ye may weep! She was a sightly creature to see to; but think ye, if I didna mourn her then, that I can mourn her now? Na, na! I left Teresa wi' the dead corpse and new-born babe till I gaed up to take the Countess's commands what was to be done. Late as it was, I ca'd her up, and she gar'd me ca' up your brother —'

'My brother?'

'Yes, Lord Geraldin, e'en your brother, that some said she aye wished to be her heir. At ony rate, he was the person maist concerned in the succession and heritance of the house of Glenallan.'

'And is it possible to believe, then, that my brother, out of avarice to grasp at my inheritance, would lend himself to such a base and dreadful stratagem?'

'Your mother believed it,' said the old beldam with a fiendish laugh; 'it was nae plot of my making, but what they did or said I will not say, because I did not hear. Lang and sair they consulted in the black wainscot dressing-room; and when your brother passed through the room where I was waiting it seemed to me — and I have often thought sae since syne — that the fire of hell was

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in his cheek and een. But he had left some of it with his mother at ony rate. She entered the room like a woman demented, and the first words she spoke were, "Elspeth Cheyne, did ye ever pull a new-budded flower?" I answered, as ye may believe, that I often had. "Then," said she, "ye will ken the better how to blight the spurious and heretical blossom that has sprung forth this night to disgrace my father's noble house. See here — and she gave me a golden bodkin — nothing but gold must shed the blood of Glenallan. This child is already as one of the dead, and since thou and Teresa alone ken that it lives, let it be dealt upon as ye will answer to me!" and she turned away in her fury, and left me with the bodkin in my hand. Here it is: that and the ring of Miss Neville are a' I hae preserved of my ill-gotten gear, for muckle was the gear I got. And weel hae I keepit the secret, but no for the gowd or gear either.'

Her long and bony hand held out to Lord Glenallan a gold bodkin, down which in fancy he saw the blood of his infant trickling.

'Wretch! had you the heart?'

'I kenna if I could hae had it or no. I returned to my cottage without feeling the ground that I trode on; but Teresa and the child were gane, a' that was alive was gane — naething left but the lifeless corpse.'

'And did you never learn my infant's fate?'

'I could but guess. I have tauld ye your mother's purpose, and I ken Teresa was a fiend. She was never mair seen in Scotland, and I have heard that she returned to her ain land. A dark curtain has fa'en ower the past, and the few that witnessed ony part of it could only surmise something of seduction and suicide. You yourself —'

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‘I know — I know it all,’ answered the Earl.

‘You indeed know all that I can say. And now, heir of Glenallan, can you forgive me?’

‘Ask forgiveness of God, and not of man,’ said the Earl, turning away.

‘And how shall I ask of the pure and unstained what is denied to me by a sinner like mysell? If I hae sinned, hae I not suffered? Hae I had a day’s peace or an hour’s rest since these lang wet locks of hair first lay upon my pillow at Craighburnfoot? Has not my house been burned, wi’ my bairn in the cradle? Have not my boats been wrecked, when a’ others weathered the gale? Have not a’ that were near and dear to me dree’d penance for my sin? Has not the fire had its share o’ them, the winds had their part, the sea had her part? And oh!’ she added, with a lengthened groan, looking first upwards towards heaven, and then bending her eyes on the floor — ‘oh! that the earth would take her part that’s been lang, lang wearying to be joined to it!’

Lord Glenallan had reached the door of the cottage, but the generosity of his nature did not permit him to leave the unhappy woman in this state of desperate reprobation. ‘May God forgive thee, wretched woman,’ he said, ‘as sincerely as I do! Turn for mercy to Him who can alone grant mercy, and may your prayers be heard as if they were mine own! I will send a religious man.’

‘Na, na, nae priest! nae priest!’ she ejaculated; and the door of the cottage opening as she spoke prevented her from proceeding.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Still in his dead hand clench'd remain the strings
That thrill his father's heart, e'en as the limb,
Lopped off and laid in grave, retains, they tell us,
Strange commerce with the mutilated stump,
Whose nerves are twinging still in maim'd existence.

Old Play.

THE Antiquary, as we informed the reader in the end of the thirty-first chapter, had shaken off the company of worthy Mr. Blattergowl, although he offered to entertain him with an abstract of the ablest speech he had ever known in the teind court, delivered by the procurator for the church in the remarkable case of the parish of Gatherem. Resisting this temptation, our senior preferred a solitary path, which again conducted him to the cottage of Mucklebackit. When he came in front of the fisherman's hut, he observed a man working intently, as if to repair a shattered boat which lay upon the beach, and, going up to him, was surprised to find it was Mucklebackit himself. 'I am glad,' he said, in a tone of sympathy — 'I am glad, Saunders, that you feel yourself able to make this exertion.'

'And what would ye have me to do,' answered the fisher, gruffly, 'unless I wanted to see four children starve, because ane is drowned? It's weel wi' you gentles, that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your een when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us maun to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as hard as my hammer.'

Without taking more notice of Oldbuck, he proceeded

in his labour; and the Antiquary, to whom the display of human nature under the influence of agitating passions was never indifferent, stood beside him in silent attention, as if watching the progress of the work. He observed more than once the man's hard features, as if by the force of association, prepare to accompany the sound of the saw and hammer with his usual symphony of a rude tune hummed or whistled, and as often a slight twitch of convulsive expression showed that ere the sound was uttered a cause for suppressing it rushed upon his mind. At length, when he had patched a considerable rent and was beginning to mend another, his feelings appeared altogether to derange the power of attention necessary for his work. The piece of wood which he was about to nail on was at first too long; then he sawed it off too short; then chose another equally ill adapted for the purpose. At length, throwing it down in anger, after wiping his dim eye with his quivering hand, he exclaimed, 'There is a curse either on me or on this auld black bitch of a boat, that I have hauled up high and dry, and patched and clouted sae mony years, that she might drown my poor Steenie at the end of them, an' be d—d to her!' and he flung his hammer against the boat, as if she had been the intentional cause of his misfortune. Then recollecting himself, he added, 'Yet what needs ane be angry at her, that has neither soul nor sense? though I am no that muckle better mysell. She's but a rickle o' auld rotten deals nailed thegither, and warped wi' the wind and the sea; and I am a dour carle, battered by foul weather at sea and land till I am maist as senseless as hersell. She maun be mended though again' the morning tide; that's a thing o' necessity.'

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Thus speaking, he went to gather together his instruments and attempt to resume his labour, but Oldbuck took him kindly by the arm. 'Come, come,' he said, 'Saunders, there is no work for you this day; I'll send down Shavings, the carpenter, to mend the boat, and he may put the day's work into my account; and you had better not come out to-morrow, but stay to comfort your family under this dispensation, and the gardener will bring you some vegetables and meal from Monkbarns.'

'I thank ye, Monkbarns,' answered the poor fisher; 'I am a plain-spoken man, and hae little to say for mysell; I might hae learned fairer fashions frae my mither lang syne, but I never saw muckle gude they did her; however, I thank ye. Ye were aye kind and neighbourly, whatever folk says o' your being near and close; and I hae often said in thae times when they were ganging to raise up the puir folk against the gentles — I hae often said, ne'er a man should steer a hair touching to Monkbarns while Steenie and I could wag a finger; and so said Steenie too. And, Monkbarns, when ye laid his head in the grave — and mony thanks for the respect — ye saw the mouls laid on an honest lad that likit you weel, though he made little phrase about it.'

Oldbuck, beaten from the pride of his affected cynicism, would not willingly have had any one by upon that occasion to quote to him his favourite maxims of the Stoic philosophy. The large drops fell fast from his own eyes as he begged the father, who was now melted at recollecting the bravery and generous sentiments of his son, to forbear useless sorrow, and led him by the arm towards his own home, where another scene awaited our

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Antiquary. As he entered, the first person whom he beheld was Lord Glenallan.

Mutual surprise was in their countenances as they saluted each other, with haughty reserve on the part of Mr. Oldbuck and embarrassment on that of the Earl.

‘My Lord Glenallan, I think?’ said Mr. Oldbuck.

‘Yes, much changed from what he was when he knew Mr. Oldbuck.’

‘I do not mean,’ said the Antiquary, ‘to intrude upon your lordship; I only came to see this distressed family.’

‘And you have found one, sir, who has still greater claims on your compassion.’

‘My compassion! Lord Glenallan cannot need *my* compassion; if Lord Glenallan could need it, I think he would hardly ask it.’

‘Our former acquaintance,’ said the Earl —

‘Is of such ancient date, my lord, was of such short duration, and was connected with circumstances so exquisitely painful, that I think we may dispense with renewing it.’

So saying, the Antiquary turned away and left the hut; but Lord Glenallan followed him into the open air, and, in spite of a hasty ‘Good morning, my lord,’ requested a few minutes’ conversation, and the favour of his advice in an important matter.

‘Your lordship will find many more capable to advise you, my lord, and by whom your intercourse will be deemed an honour. For me, I am a man retired from business and the world, and not very fond of raking up the past events of my useless life; and forgive me if I say I have particular pain in reverting to that period of it

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when I acted like a fool, and your lordship like —' He stopped short.

'Like a villain, you would say,' said Lord Glenallan; 'for such I must have appeared to you.'

'My lord, my lord, I have no desire to hear your shrift,' said the Antiquary.

'But, sir, if I can show you that I am more sinned against than sinning, that I have been a man miserable beyond the power of description, and who looks forward at this moment to an untimely grave as to a haven of rest, you will not refuse the confidence which, accepting your appearance at this critical moment as a hint from Heaven, I venture thus to press on you.'

'Assuredly, my lord, I shall shun no longer the continuation of this extraordinary interview.'

'I must then recall to you our occasional meetings upwards of twenty years since at Knockwinnock Castle, and I need not remind you of a lady who was then a member of that family.'

'The unfortunate Miss Eveline Neville, my lord, I remember it well.'

'Towards whom you entertained sentiments —'

'Very different from those with which I before and since have regarded her sex; her gentleness, her docility, her pleasure in the studies which I pointed out to her, attached by affections more than became my age — though that was not then much advanced — or the solidity of my character. But I need not remind your lordship of the various modes in which you indulged your gaiety at the expense of an awkward and retired student, embarrassed by the expression of feelings so new to him, and I have no doubt that the young lady joined you in

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the well-deserved ridicule. It is the way of womankind. I have spoken at once to the painful circumstances of my addresses and their rejection, that your lordship may be satisfied everything is full in my memory, and may, so far as I am concerned, tell your story without scruple or needless delicacy.'

'I will,' said Lord Glenallan; 'but first let me say, you do injustice to the memory of the gentlest and kindest, as well as to the most unhappy, of women to suppose she could make a jest of the honest affection of a man like you. Frequently did she blame me, Mr. Oldbuck, for indulging my levity at your expense. May I now presume you will excuse the gay freedoms which then offended you? My state of mind has never since laid me under the necessity of apologising for the inadvertencies of a light and happy temper.'

'My lord, you are fully pardoned,' said Mr. Oldbuck. 'You should be aware that, like all others, I was ignorant at the time that I placed myself in competition with your lordship, and understood that Miss Neville was in a state of dependence which might make her prefer a competent independence and the hand of an honest man. But I am wasting time; I would I could believe that the views entertained towards her by others were as fair and honest as mine!'

'Mr. Oldbuck, you judge harshly.'

'Not without cause, my lord. When I only, of all the magistrates of this county, having neither, like some of them, the honour to be connected with your powerful family, nor, like others, the meanness to fear it — when I made some inquiry into the manner of Miss Neville's death — I shake you, my lord, but I must be plain — I

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do own I had every reason to believe that she had met most unfair dealing, and had either been imposed upon by a counterfeit marriage, or that very strong measures had been adopted to stifle and destroy the evidence of a real union. And I cannot doubt in my own mind that this cruelty on your lordship's part, whether coming of your own free will or proceeding from the influence of the late Countess, hurried the unfortunate young lady to the desperate act by which her life was terminated.'

'You are deceived, Mr. Oldbuck, into conclusions which are not just, however naturally they flow from the circumstances. Believe me, I respected you even when I was most embarrassed by your active attempts to investigate our family misfortunes. You showed yourself more worthy of Miss Neville than I by the spirit with which you persisted in vindicating her reputation even after her death. But the firm belief, that your well-meant efforts could only serve to bring to light a story too horrible to be detailed, induced me to join my unhappy mother in schemes to remove or destroy all evidence of the legal union which had taken place between Eveline and myself. And now let us sit down on this bank, for I feel unable to remain longer standing, and have the goodness to listen to the extraordinary discovery which I have this day made.'

They sate down accordingly; and Lord Glenallan briefly narrated his unhappy family history — his concealed marriage, the horrible invention by which his mother had designed to render impossible that union which had already taken place. He detailed the arts by which the Countess, having all the documents relative to Miss Neville's birth in her hands, had produced those

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only relating to a period during which, for family reasons, his father had consented to own that young lady as his natural daughter, and showed how impossible it was that he could either suspect or detect the fraud put upon him by his mother, and vouched by the oaths of her attendants, Teresa and Elspeth. 'I left my paternal mansion,' he concluded, 'as if the furies of hell had driven me forth, and travelled with frantic velocity I knew not whither. Nor have I the slightest recollection of what I did or whither I went, until I was discovered by my brother. I will not trouble you with an account of my sick-bed and recovery, or how, long afterwards, I ventured to inquire after the sharer of my misfortunes, and heard that her despair had found a dreadful remedy for all the ills of life. The first thing that roused me to thought was hearing of your inquiries into this cruel business; and you will hardly wonder that, believing what I did believe, I should join in those expedients to stop your investigation which my brother and mother had actively commenced. The information which I gave them concerning the circumstances and witnesses of our private marriage enabled them to baffle your zeal. The clergyman, therefore, and witnesses, as persons who had acted in the matter only to please the powerful heir of Glenallan, were accessible to his promises and threats, and were so provided for that they had no objections to leave this country for another. For myself, Mr. Oldbuck,' pursued this unhappy man, 'from that moment I considered myself as blotted out of the book of the living, and as having nothing left to do with this world. My mother tried to reconcile me to life by every art, even by intimations which I can now interpret as calcu-

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lated to produce a doubt of the horrible tale she herself had fabricated. But I construed all she said as the fictions of maternal affection. I will forbear all reproach; she is no more, and, as her wretched associate said, she knew not how the dart was poisoned, or how deep it must sink, when she threw it from her hand. But, Mr. Oldbuck, if ever during these twenty years there crawled upon earth a living being deserving of your pity, I have been that man. My food has not nourished me, my sleep has not refreshed me, my devotions have not comforted me, all that is cheering and necessary to man has been to me converted into poison. The rare and limited intercourse which I have held with others has been most odious to me. I felt as if I were bringing the contamination of unnatural and inexpressible guilt among the gay and the innocent. There have been moments when I had thoughts of another description — to plunge into the adventures of war, or to brave the dangers of the traveller in foreign and barbarous climates, to mingle in political intrigue, or to retire to the stern seclusion of the anchorites of our religion. All these are thoughts which have alternately passed through my mind, but each required an energy which was mine no longer after the withering stroke I had received. I vegetated on as I could in the same spot, fancy, feeling, judgment, and health gradually decaying, like a tree whose bark has been destroyed, when first the blossoms fade, then the boughs, until its state resembles the decayed and dying trunk that is now before you. Do you now pity and forgive me?’

‘My lord,’ answered the Antiquary, much affected, ‘my pity, my forgiveness, you have not to ask, for your

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dismal story is of itself not only an ample excuse for whatever appeared mysterious in your conduct, but a narrative that might move your worst enemies — and I, my lord, was never of the number — to tears and to sympathy. But permit me to ask what you now mean to do, and why you have honoured me, whose opinion can be of little consequence, with your confidence on this occasion?’

‘Mr. Oldbuck,’ answered the Earl, ‘as I could never have foreseen the nature of that confession which I have heard this day, I need not say that I had no formed plan of consulting you or any one upon affairs the tendency of which I could not even have suspected. But I am without friends, unused to business, and by long retirement unacquainted alike with the laws of the land and the habits of the living generation; and when, most unexpectedly, I find myself immersed in the matters of which I know least, I catch, like a drowning man, at the first support that offers. You are that support, Mr. Oldbuck. I have always heard you mentioned as a man of wisdom and intelligence, I have known you myself as a man of a resolute and independent spirit, and there is one circumstance,’ said he, ‘which ought to combine us in some degree — our having paid tribute to the same excellence of character in poor Eveline. You offered yourself to me in my need, and you were already acquainted with the beginning of my misfortunes. To you, therefore, I have recourse for advice, for sympathy, for support.’

‘You shall seek none of them in vain, my lord,’ said Oldbuck, ‘so far as my slender ability extends; and I am honoured by the preference, whether it arises from choice

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or is prompted by chance. But this is a matter to be ripely considered. May I ask what are your principal views at present?’

‘To ascertain the fate of my child,’ said the Earl, ‘be the consequences what they may, and to do justice to the honour of Eveline, which I have only permitted to be suspected to avoid discovery of the yet more horrible taint to which I was made to believe it liable.’

‘And the memory of your mother?’

‘Must bear its own burden,’ answered the Earl with a sigh; ‘better that she were justly convicted of deceit, should that be found necessary, than that others should be unjustly accused of crimes so much more dreadful.’

‘Then, my lord,’ said Oldbuck, ‘our first business must be to put the information of the old woman, Elspeth, into a regular and authenticated form.’

‘That,’ said Lord Glenallan, ‘will be at present, I fear, impossible. She is exhausted herself, and surrounded by her distressed family. To-morrow, perhaps, when she is alone — and yet I doubt, from her imperfect sense of right and wrong, whether she would speak out in any one’s presence but my own. I too am sorely fatigued.’

‘Then, my lord,’ said the Antiquary, whom the interest of the moment elevated above points of expense and convenience, which had generally more than enough of weight with him, ‘I would propose to your lordship, instead of returning, fatigued as you are, so far as to Glenallan House, or taking the more uncomfortable alternative of going to a bad inn at Fairport, to alarm all the busybodies of the town — I would propose, I say, that you should be my guest at Monkbarns for this night. By to-morrow these poor people will have renewed their

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out-of-doors vocation, for sorrow with them affords no respite from labour; and we will visit the old woman, Elspeth, alone and take down her examination.'

After a formal apology for the encroachment, Lord Glenallan agreed to go with him, and underwent with patience in their return home the whole history of John of the Girnell, a legend which Mr. Oldbuck was never known to spare any one who crossed his threshold.

The arrival of a stranger of such note, with two saddle horses and a servant in black, which servant had holsters on his saddle-bow and a coronet upon the holsters, created a general commotion in the house of Monkbarns. Jenny Rintherout, scarce recovered from the hysterics which she had taken on hearing of poor Steenie's misfortune, chased about the turkeys and poultry, cackled and screamed louder than they did, and ended by killing one-half too many. Miss Griselda made many wise reflections on the hot-headed wilfulness of her brother, who had occasioned such devastation by suddenly bringing in upon them a papist nobleman. And she ventured to transmit to Mr. Blattergowl some hint of the unusual slaughter which had taken place in the *basse-cour*, which brought the honest clergyman to inquire how his friend Monkbarns had got home, and whether he was not the worse of being at the funeral, at a period so near the ringing of the bell for dinner that the Antiquary had no choice left but to invite him to stay and bless the meat. Miss M'Intyre had on her part some curiosity to see this mighty peer, of whom all had heard, as an Eastern caliph or sultan is heard of by his subjects, and felt some degree of timidity at the idea of encountering a person of whose unsocial habits and stern manners so many stories

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were told that her fear kept at least pace with her curiosity. The aged housekeeper was no less flustered and hurried in obeying the numerous and contradictory commands of her mistress concerning preserves, pastry, and fruit, the mode of marshalling and dishing the dinner, the necessity of not permitting the melted butter to run to oil, and the danger of allowing Juno — who, though formally banished from the parlour, failed not to maraud about the out-settlements of the family — to enter the kitchen.

The only inmate of Monkbarns who remained entirely indifferent on this momentous occasion was Hector M'Intyre, who cared no more for an earl than he did for a commoner, and who was only interested in the unexpected visit as it might afford some protection against his uncle's displeasure, if he harboured any, for his not attending the funeral, and still more against his satire upon the subject of his gallant but unsuccessful single combat with the *phoca* or seal.

To these, the inmates of his household, Oldbuck presented the Earl of Glenallan, who underwent with meek and subdued civility the prosing speeches of the honest divine and the lengthened apologies of Miss Griselda Oldbuck, which her brother in vain endeavoured to abridge. Before the dinner hour Lord Glenallan requested permission to retire a while to his chamber. Mr. Oldbuck accompanied his guest to the Green Room, which had been hastily prepared for his reception. He looked around with an air of painful recollection.

'I think,' at length he observed — 'I think, Mr. Oldbuck, 'that I have been in this apartment before.'

'Yes, my lord,' answered Oldbuck, 'upon occasion of

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an excursion hither from Knockwinnock; and since we are upon a subject so melancholy, you may perhaps remember whose taste supplied these lines from Chaucer which now form the motto of the tapestry?’

‘I guess,’ said the Earl, ‘though I cannot recollect. She excelled me, indeed, in literary taste and information, as in everything else, and it is one of the mysterious dispensations of Providence, Mr. Oldbuck, that a creature so excellent in mind and body should have been cut off in so miserable a manner, merely from her having formed a fatal attachment to such a wretch as I am.’

Mr. Oldbuck did not attempt an answer to this burst of the grief which lay ever nearest to the heart of his guest, but, pressing Lord Glenallan’s hand with one of his own and drawing the other across his shaggy eyelashes, as if to brush away a mist that intercepted his sight, he left the Earl at liberty to arrange himself previous to dinner.

CHAPTER XXXV

Life, with you,
Glow in the brain and dances in the arteries;
'T is like the wine some joyous guest hath quaffed,
That glads the heart and elevates the fancy;
Mine is the poor residuum of the cup,
Vapid, and dull, and tasteless, only soiling,
With its base dregs, the vessel that contains it.

Old Play.

'Now only think what a man my brother is, Mr. Blattergowl, for a wise man and a learned man, to bring this Yerl into our house without speaking a single word to a body! And there's the distress of thae Mucklebackits—we canna get a fin o' fish; and we hae nae time to send ower to Fairport for beef, and the mutton's but new killed; and that silly fliskmahoy, Jenny Rintherout, has taen the exies, and done naething but laugh and greet, the skirl at the tail o' the guffa', for twa days successfully; and now we maun ask that strange man, that's as grand and as grave as the Yerl himsell, to stand at the side-board! And I canna gang into the kitchen to direct ony thing, for he's hovering there making some pousowdie for my lord, for he doesna eat like ither folk neither. And how to sort the strange servant man at dinner-time — I am sure, Mr. Blattergowl, a'thegither it passes my judgment.'

'Truly, Miss Griselda,' replied the divine, 'Monkbarns was inconsiderate. He should have taen a day to see the invitation, as they do wi' the titular's condescendence in the process of valuation and sale. But the great man could not have come on a sudden to ony house in

this parish where he could have been better served with "vivers" — that I must say, and also that the steam from the kitchen is very gratifying to my nostrils, and if ye have ony household affairs to attend to, Mrs. Griselda, never make a stranger of me; I can amuse myself very weel with the larger copy of Erskine's "Institutes."

And, taking down from the window seat that amusing folio (the Scottish Coke upon Littleton), he opened it, as if instinctively, at the tenth title of Book Second, 'Of Teinds or Tythes,' and was presently deeply wrapped up in an abstruse discussion concerning the temporality of benefices.

The entertainment, about which Miss Oldbuck expressed so much anxiety, was at length placed upon the table; and the Earl of Glenallan, for the first time since the date of his calamity, sat at a stranger's board surrounded by strangers. He seemed to himself like a man in a dream, or one whose brain was not fully recovered from the effects of an intoxicating potion. Relieved, as he had that morning been, from the image of guilt which had so long haunted his imagination, he felt his sorrows as a lighter and more tolerable load, but was still unable to take any share in the conversation that passed around him. It was, indeed, of a cast very different from that which he had been accustomed to. The bluntness of Oldbuck, the tiresome apologetic harangues of his sister, the pedantry of the divine, and the vivacity of the young soldier, which savoured much more of the camp than of the court, were all new to a nobleman who had lived in a retired and melancholy state for so many years that the manners of the world seemed to him equally strange and unpleasing. Miss M'Intyre alone, from the natural

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politeness and unpretending simplicity of her manners, appeared to belong to that class of society to which he had been accustomed in his earlier and better days.

Nor did Lord Glenallan's deportment less surprise the company. Though a plain but excellent family dinner was provided (for, as Mr. Blattergowl had justly said, it was impossible to surprise Miss Griselda when her larder was empty), and though the Antiquary boasted his best port, and assimilated it to the Falernian of Horace, Lord Glenallan was proof to the allurements of both. His servant placed before him a small mess of vegetables — that very dish the cooking of which had alarmed Miss Griselda — arranged with the most minute and scrupulous neatness. He eat sparingly of these provisions; and a glass of pure water, sparkling from the fountain-head, completed his repast. 'Such,' his servant said, 'had been his lordship's diet for very many years, unless upon the high festivals of the Church, or when company of the first rank were entertained at Glenallan House, when he relaxed a little in the austerity of his diet, and permitted himself a glass or two of wine.' But at Monkbarns no anchoret could have made a more simple and scanty meal.

The Antiquary was a gentleman, as we have seen, in feeling, but blunt and careless in expression, from the habit of living with those before whom he had nothing to suppress. He attacked his noble guest without scruple on the severity of his regimen.

'A few half-cold greens and potatoes, a glass of ice-cold water to wash them down — antiquity gives no warrant for it, my lord. This house used to be accounted a *hospitium*, a place of retreat for Christians; but your

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lordship's diet is that of a heathen Pythagorean or Indian Bramin; nay, more severe than either, if you refuse these fine apples.'

'I am a Catholic, you are aware,' said Lord Glenallan, wishing to escape from the discussion, 'and you know that our church —'

'Lays down many rules of mortification,' proceeded the dauntless Antiquary; 'but I never heard that they were quite so rigorously practised. Bear witness my predecessor, John of the Girnell, or the jolly abbot who gave his name to this apple, my lord.'

And as he pared the fruit, in spite of his sister's 'O fie, Monkbarns,' and the prolonged cough of the minister, accompanied by a shake of his huge wig, the Antiquary proceeded to detail the intrigue which had given rise to the fame of the abbot's apple with more slyness and circumstantiality than was at all necessary. His jest, as may readily be conceived, missed fire, for this anecdote of conventual gallantry failed to produce the slightest smile on the visage of the Earl. Oldbuck then took up the subject of Ossian, Macpherson, and Mac-Cribb; but Lord Glenallan had never so much as heard of any of the three, so little conversant had he been with modern literature. The conversation was now in some danger of flagging, or of falling into the hands of Mr. Blattergowl, who had just pronounced the formidable word, 'teind-free,' when the subject of the French Revolution was started; a political event on which Lord Glenallan looked with all the prejudiced horror of a bigoted Catholic and zealous aristocrat. Oldbuck was far from carrying his detestation of its principles to such a length.

'There were many men in the first Constituent Assem-

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bly,' he said, 'who held sound Whiggish doctrines, and were for settling the constitution with a proper provision for the liberties of the people. And if a set of furious madmen were now in possession of the government, it was,' he continued, 'what often happened in great revolutions, where extreme measures are adopted in the fury of the moment, and the state resembles an agitated pendulum which swings from side to side for some time ere it can acquire its due and perpendicular station. Or it might be likened to a storm or hurricane, which, passing over a region, does great damage in its passage, yet sweeps away stagnant and unwholesome vapours, and repays, in future health and fertility, its immediate desolation and ravage.'

The Earl shook his head; but, having neither spirit nor inclination for debate, he suffered the argument to pass uncontested.

This discussion served to introduce the young soldier's experiences; and he spoke of the actions in which he had been engaged with modesty, and at the same time with an air of spirit and zeal which delighted the Earl, who had been bred up, like others of his house, in the opinion that the trade of arms was the first duty of man, and believed that to employ them against the French was a sort of holy warfare.

'What would I give,' said he apart to Oldbuck, as they rose to join the ladies in the drawing-room — 'what would I give to have a son of such spirit as that young gentleman! He wants something of address and manner, something of polish, which mixing in good society would soon give him; but with what zeal and animation he expresses himself, how fond of his profession,

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how loud in the praise of others, how modest when speaking of himself!

‘Hector is much obliged to you, my lord,’ replied his uncle, gratified, yet not so much so as to suppress his consciousness of his own mental superiority over the young soldier; ‘I believe in my heart nobody ever spoke half so much good of him before, except perhaps the sergeant of his company, when he was wheedling a Highland recruit to enlist with him. He is a good lad notwithstanding, although he be not quite the hero your lordship supposes him, and although my commendations rather attest the kindness than the vivacity of his character. In fact, his high spirit is a sort of constitutional vehemence which attends him in everything he sets about, and is often very inconvenient to his friends. I saw him to-day engage in an animated contest with a *phoca* or seal — “sealgh,” our people more properly call them, retaining the Gothic guttural *gh* — with as much vehemence as if he had fought against Dumourier. Marry, my lord, the *phoca* had the better, as the said Dumourier had of some other folks. And he’ll talk with equal if not superior rapture of the good behaviour of a pointer bitch as of the plan of a campaign.’

‘He shall have full permission to sport over my grounds,’ said the Earl, ‘if he is so fond of that exercise.’

‘You will bind him to you, my lord,’ said Monkbarns, ‘body and soul; give him leave to crack off his birding-piece at a poor covey of partridges or moor-fowl, and he’s yours for ever. I will enchant him by the intelligence. But O, my lord, that you could have seen my phoenix Lovel! the very prince and chieftain of the youth of this age, and not destitute of spirit neither: I promise

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you he gave my termagant kinsman a *quid pro quo* — a Rowland for his Oliver, as the vulgar say, alluding to the two celebrated Paladins of Charlemagne.'

After coffee, Lord Glenallan requested a private interview with the Antiquary, and was ushered to his library.

'I must withdraw you from your own amiable family,' he said, 'to involve you in the perplexities of an unhappy man. You are acquainted with the world, from which I have long been banished; for Glenallan House has been to me rather a prison than a dwelling, although a prison which I had neither fortitude nor spirit to break from.'

'Let me first ask your lordship,' said the Antiquary, 'what are your own wishes and designs in this matter?'

'I wish most especially,' answered Lord Glenallan, 'to declare my luckless marriage and to vindicate the reputation of the unhappy Eveline; that is, if you see a possibility of doing so without making public the conduct of my mother.'

'*Suum cuique tribuito*,' said the Antiquary, 'do right to every one. The memory of that unhappy young lady has too long suffered, and I think it might be cleared without further impeaching that of your mother than by letting it be understood in general that she greatly disapproved and bitterly opposed the match. All — forgive me, my lord — all who ever heard of the late Countess of Glenallan will learn that without much surprise.'

'But you forget one horrible circumstance, Mr. Oldbuck,' said the Earl, in an agitated voice.

'I am not aware of it,' replied the Antiquary.

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‘The fate of the infant — its disappearance with the confidential attendant of my mother, and the dreadful surmises which may be drawn from my conversation with Elspeth.’

‘If you would have my free opinion, my lord,’ answered Mr. Oldbuck, ‘and will not catch too rapidly at it as matter of hope, I would say that it is very possible the child yet lives. For thus much I ascertained by my former inquiries concerning the event of that deplorable evening, that a child and woman were carried that night from the cottage at the Craighburnfoot in a carriage and four by your brother, Edward Geraldin Neville, whose journey towards England with these companions I traced for several stages. I believed then it was a part of the family compact to carry a child whom you meant to stigmatise with illegitimacy out of that country where chance might have raised protectors and proofs of its rights. But I now think that your brother, having reason, like yourself, to believe the child stained with shame yet more indelible, had nevertheless withdrawn it, partly from regard to the honour of his house, partly from the risk to which it might have been exposed in the neighbourhood of the Lady Glenallan.’

As he spoke, the Earl of Glenallan grew extremely pale, and had nearly fallen from his chair. The alarmed Antiquary ran hither and thither looking for remedies; but his museum, though sufficiently well filled with a vast variety of useless matters, contained nothing that could be serviceable on the present or any other occasion. As he posted out of the room to borrow his sister’s salts, he could not help giving a constitutional growl of chagrin and wonder at the various incidents which had con-

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verted his mansion, first into an hospital for a wounded duellist and now into the sick-chamber of a dying nobleman. 'And yet,' said he, 'I have always kept aloof from the soldiery and the peerage. My *cænobitium* has only next to be made a lying-in hospital, and then I trow the transformation will be complete.'

When he returned with the remedy Lord Glenallan was much better. The new and unexpected light which Mr. Oldbuck had thrown upon the melancholy history of his family had almost overpowered him. 'You think, then, Mr. Oldbuck — for you are capable of thinking, which I am not — you think, then, that it is possible — that is, not impossible — my child may yet live?'

'I think,' said the Antiquary, 'it is impossible that it could come to any violent harm through your brother's means. He was known to be a gay and dissipated man, but not cruel nor dishonourable; nor is it possible that, if he had intended any foul play, he would have placed himself so forward in the charge of the infant as I will prove to your lordship he did.'

So saying, Mr. Oldbuck opened a drawer of the cabinet of his ancestor, Aldobrand, and produced a bundle of papers tied with a black ribband and labelled, 'Examinations, etc., taken by Jonathan Oldbuck, J.P., upon the 18th of February 17 —.' A little under was written in a small hand, *Eheu Evelina!* The tears dropped fast from the Earl's eyes as he endeavoured in vain to unfasten the knot which secured these documents.

'Your lordship,' said Mr. Oldbuck, 'had better not read these at present. Agitated as you are, and having much business before you, you must not exhaust your

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strength. Your brother's succession is now, I presume, your own, and it will be easy for you to make inquiry among his servants and retainers, so as to hear where the child is, if, fortunately, it shall be still alive.'

'I dare hardly hope it,' said the Earl, with a deep sigh; 'why should my brother have been silent to me?'

'Nay, my lord! why should he have communicated to your lordship the existence of a being whom you must have supposed the offspring of —'

'Most true; there is an obvious and a kind reason for his being silent. If anything, indeed, could have added to the horror of the ghastly dream that has poisoned my whole existence, it must have been the knowledge that such a child of misery existed.'

'Then,' continued the Antiquary, 'although it would be rash to conclude, at the distance of more than twenty years, that your son must needs be still alive because he was not destroyed in infancy, I own I think you should instantly set on foot inquiries.'

'It shall be done,' replied Lord Glenallan, catching eagerly at the hope held out to him, the first he had nourished for many years; 'I will write to a faithful steward of my father, who acted in the same capacity under my brother Neville; but, Mr. Oldbuck, I am not my brother's heir.'

'Indeed! I am sorry for that, my lord: it is a noble estate, and the ruins of the old castle of Neville's Burgh alone, which are the most superb relics of Anglo-Norman architecture in that part of the country, are a possession much to be coveted. I thought your father had no other son or near relative.'

'He had not, Mr. Oldbuck,' replied Lord Glenallan;

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‘but my brother adopted views in politics and a form of religion alien from those which had been always held by our house. Our tempers had long differed, nor did my unhappy mother always think him sufficiently observant to her. In short, there was a family quarrel, and my brother, whose property was at his own free disposal, availed himself of the power vested in him to choose a stranger for his heir. It is a matter which never struck me as being of the least consequence; for, if worldly possessions could alleviate misery, I have enough and to spare. But now I shall regret it if it throws any difficulty in the way of our inquiries; and I bethink me that it may, for, in case of my having a lawful son of my body and my brother dying without issue, my father’s possessions stood entailed upon my son. It is not, therefore, likely that this heir, be he who he may, will afford us assistance in making a discovery which may turn out so much to his own prejudice.’

‘And in all probability the steward your lordship mentions is also in his service,’ said the Antiquary.

‘It is most likely; and the man being a Protestant, how far it is safe to entrust him —’

‘I should hope, my lord,’ said Oldbuck, gravely, ‘that a Protestant may be as trustworthy as a Catholic. I am doubly interested in the Protestant faith, my lord. My ancestor, Aldobrand Oldenbuck, printed the celebrated Confession of Augsburg, as I can show by the original edition now in this house.’

‘I have not the least doubt of what you say, Mr. Oldbuck,’ replied the Earl, ‘nor do I speak out of bigotry or intolerance; but probably the Protestant steward will favour the Protestant heir rather than the Catholic —’

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if, indeed, my son has been bred in his father's faith, or alas! if indeed he yet lives.'

'We must look close into this,' said Oldbuck, 'before committing ourselves. I have a literary friend at York, with whom I have long corresponded on the subject of the Saxon horn that is preserved in the minster there; we interchanged letters for six years, and have only as yet been able to settle the first line of the inscription. I will write forthwith to this gentleman, Dr. Dryasdust, and be particular in my inquiries concerning the character, etc., of your brother's heir, of the gentleman employed in his affairs, and what else may be likely to further your lordship's inquiries. In the meantime your lordship will collect the evidence of the marriage, which I hope can still be recovered?'

'Unquestionably,' replied the Earl; 'the witnesses who were formerly withdrawn from your research are still living. My tutor, who solemnised the marriage, was provided for by a living in France, and has lately returned to this country as an emigrant, a victim of his zeal for loyalty, legitimacy, and religion.'

'That's one lucky consequence of the French Revolution, my lord, you must allow that at least,' said Oldbuck; 'but no offence, I will act as warmly in your affairs as if I were of your own faith in politics and religion. And take my advice: if you want an affair of consequence properly managed, put it into the hands of an antiquary; for, as they are eternally exercising their genius and research upon trifles, it is impossible they can be baffled in affairs of importance. Use makes perfect, and the corps that is most frequently drilled upon the parade will be most prompt in its exercise upon the day

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of battle. And, talking upon that subject, I would willingly read to your lordship in order to pass away the time betwixt and supper —'

'I beg I may not interfere with family arrangements,' said Lord Glenallan, 'but I never taste anything after sunset.'

'Nor I either, my lord,' answered his host, 'notwithstanding it is said to have been the custom of the ancients; but then I dine differently from your lordship, and therefore am better enabled to dispense with those elaborate entertainments which my womankind (that is, my sister and niece, my lord) are apt to place on the table, for the display rather of their own housewifery than the accommodation of our wants. However, a broiled bone, or a smoked haddock, or an oyster, or a slice of bacon of our own curing, with a toast and a tankard, or something or other of that sort, to close the orifice of the stomach before going to bed, does not fall under my restriction, nor, I hope, under your lordship's.'

'My "no supper" is literal, Mr. Oldbuck; but I will attend you at your meal with pleasure.'

'Well, my lord,' replied the Antiquary, 'I will endeavour to entertain your ears at least, since I cannot banquet your palate. What I am about to read to your lordship relates to the upland glens.'

Lord Glenallan, though he would rather have recurred to the subject of his own uncertainties, was compelled to make a sign of rueful civility and acquiescence.

The Antiquary, therefore, took out his portfolio of loose sheets, and, after premising that the topographical details here laid down were designed to illustrate a slight essay upon castrametation, which had been

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read with indulgence at several societies of antiquaries, he commenced as follows: 'The subject, my lord, is the hill-fort of Quickens Bog, with the site of which your lordship is doubtless familiar. It is upon your storefarm of Mantanner, in the barony of Clochnaben.'

'I think I have heard the names of these places,' said the Earl, in answer to the Antiquary's appeal.

'Heard the name! and the farm brings him six hundred a year. O Lord!'

Such was the scarce subdued ejaculation of the Antiquary. But his hospitality got the better of his surprise, and he proceeded to read his essay with an audible voice, in great glee at having secured a patient, and, as he fondly hoped, an interested hearer.

'Quickens Bog may at first seem to derive its name from the plant quicken, by which, *Scotticé*, we understand couch-grass, dog-grass, or the *Triticum repens* of Linnæus; and the common English monosyllable "bog," by which we mean, in popular language, a marsh or morass, in Latin *palus*. But it may confound the rash adopters of the more obvious etymological derivations to learn that the couch-grass or dog-grass, or, to speak scientifically, the *Triticum repens* of Linnæus, does not grow within a quarter of a mile of this *castrum* or hill-fort, whose ramparts are uniformly clothed with short verdant turf, and that we must seek a bog or *palus* at a still greater distance, the nearest being that of Gird-the-mear, a full half-mile distant. The last syllable, "bog," is obviously, therefore, a mere corruption of the Saxon *burgh*, which we find in the various transmutations of *burgh*, *burrow*, *brough*, *bruff*, *buff*, and *boff*, which last approaches very near the sound in question; since, suppos-

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ing the word to have been originally *borgh*, which is the genuine Saxon spelling, a slight change, such as modern organs too often make upon ancient sounds, will produce first *bogh*, and then, *elisa h*, or compromising and sinking the guttural, agreeable to the common vernacular practice, you have either *boff* or *bog*, as it happens. The word “quickens” requires in like manner to be altered — decomposed, as it were — and reduced to its original and genuine sound, ere we can discern its real meaning. By the ordinary exchange of the *qu* into *wh*, familiar to the rudest tyro who has opened a book of old Scottish poetry, we gain either Whilkens or Whichensborgh — put, we may suppose, by way of question, as if those who imposed the name, struck with the extreme antiquity of the place, had expressed in it an interrogation, “To whom did this fortress belong?” Or, it might be Whackensburgh, from the Saxon *whacken*, to strike with the hand, as doubtless the skirmishes near a place of such apparent consequence must have legitimated such a derivation,’ etc. etc. etc.

I will be more merciful to my readers than Oldbuck was to his guest; for, considering his opportunities of gaining patient attention from a person of such consequence as Lord Glenallan were not many, he used, or rather abused, the present to the uttermost.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together :
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter weather,
Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN the morning of the following day the Antiquary, who was something of a sluggard, was summoned from his bed a full hour earlier than his custom, by Caxon.

‘What’s the matter now?’ he exclaimed, yawning and stretching forth his hand to the huge gold repeater, which, bedded upon his India silk handkerchief, was laid safe by his pillow — ‘what’s the matter now, Caxon? it can’t be eight o’clock yet.’

‘Na, sir, but my lord’s man sought me out, for he fancies me your honour’s valley-de-sham; and sae I am, there’s nae doubt o’t, baith your honour’s and the minister’s, at least ye hae nae other that I ken o’; and I gie a help to Sir Arthur too, but that’s mair in the way o’ my profession.’

‘Well, well, never mind that,’ said the Antiquary, ‘happy is he that is his own valley-de-sham, as you call it; but why disturb my morning’s rest?’

‘Ou, sir, the great man’s been up since peep o’ day, and he’s steered the town to get awa an express to fetch his carriage, and it will be here briefly, and he wad like to see your honour afore he gaes awa.’

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‘Gadso!’ ejaculated Oldbuck, ‘these great men use one’s house and time as if they were their own property. Well, it ’s once and away. Has Jenny come to her senses yet, Caxon?’

‘Troth, sir, but just middling,’ replied the barber; ‘she’s been in a swither about the jocolate this morning, and was like to hae toomed it a’ out into the slap-basin, and drank it hersell in her ecstasies; but she ’s won ower wi’ t, wi’ the help o’ Miss M’Intyre.’

‘Then all my womankind are on foot and scrambling, and I must enjoy my quiet bed no longer, if I would have a well-regulated house. Lend me my gown. And what are the news at Fairport?’

‘Ou, sir, what can they be about but this grand news o’ my lord,’ answered the old man, ‘that hasna been ower the doorstane, they threep to me, for this twenty years — this grand news of his coming to visit your honour!’

‘Aha!’ said Monkbarns, ‘and what do they say of that, Caxon?’

‘Deed, sir, they hae various opinions. Thae fallows that are the democraws, as they ca’ them, that are again’ the king and the law, and hair powder and dressing o’ gentlemen’s wigs — a wheen blackguards! — they say he’s come down to speak wi’ your honour about bringing down his hill lads and Highland tenantry to break up the meetings of the Friends o’ the People; and when I said your honour never meddled wi’ the like o’ sic things where there was like to be straits and bloodshed, they said, if ye didna, your nevoy did, and that he was weel kend to be a king’s-man that wad fight knee-deep, and that ye were the head and he was the hand,

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and that the Yerl was to bring out the men and the siller.'

'Come,' said the Antiquary, laughing, 'I am glad the war is to cost me nothing but counsel.'

'Na, na,' said Caxon, 'naebody thinks your honour wad either fight yoursell or gie ony feck o' siller to ony side o' the question.'

'Umph! well, that's the opinion of the democraws, as you call them. What say the rest of Fairport?'

'In troth,' said the candid reporter, 'I canna say it's muckle better. Captain Coquet, of the volunteers — that's him that's to be the new collector — and some of the other gentlemen of the Blue and a' Blue Club, are just saying it's no right to let papists that hae sae mony French friends as the Yerl of Glenallan gang through the country, and — but your honour will maybe be angry?'

'Not I, Caxon,' said Oldbuck; 'fire away as if you were Captain Coquet's whole platoon, I can stand it.'

'Weel, then, they say, sir, that as ye didna encourage the petition about the peace, and wadna petition in favour of the new tax, and as ye were again' bringing in the yeomanry at the meal mob, but just for settling the folk wi' the constables — they say ye're no a gude friend to government; and that thae sort o' meetings between sic a powerfu' man as the Yerl and sic a wise man as you — od, they think they suld be lookit after, and some say ye should baith be shankit aff till Edinburgh Castle.'

'On my word,' said the Antiquary, 'I am infinitely obliged to my neighbours for their good opinion of me! And so I, that have never interfered with their bickerings but to recommend quiet and moderate measures,

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am given up on both sides as a man very likely to commit high treason, either against king or people? Give me my coat, Caxon — give me my coat. It's lucky I live not in their report. Have you heard anything of Taffril and his vessel?'

Caxon's countenance fell. 'Na, sir, and the winds hae been high, and this is a fearfu' coast to cruise on in thae eastern gales: the headlands rin sae far out that a veshell's embayed afore I could sharp a razor; and then there's nae harbour or city of refuge on our coast, a' craigs and breakers. A veshell that rins ashore wi' us flees asunder like the powther when I shake the pluff, and it's as ill to gather ony o't again. I aye tell my daughter thae things when she grows wearied for a letter frae Lieutenant Taffril. It's aye an apology for him. "Ye suldna blame him," says I, "hinny, for ye little ken what may hae happened."'

'Ay, ay, Caxon, thou art as good a comforter as a *valet-de-chambre*. Give me a white stock, man; d'ye think I can go down with a handkerchief about my neck when I have company?'

'Dear sir, the Captain says a three-nookit hankercher is the maist fashionable overlay, and that stocks belang to your honour and me that are auld-warld folk. I beg pardon for mentioning us twa thegither, but it was what he said.'

'The Captain's a puppy, and you are a goose, Caxon.'

'It's very like it may be sae,' replied the acquiescent barber; 'I am sure your honour kens best.'

Before breakfast Lord Glenallan, who appeared in better spirits than he had evinced in the former evening, went particularly through the various circumstances of

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evidence which the exertions of Oldbuck had formerly collected; and, pointing out the means which he possessed of completing the proof of his marriage, expressed his resolution instantly to go through the painful task of collecting and restoring the evidence concerning the birth of Eveline Neville which Elspeth had stated to be in his mother's possession.

'And yet, Mr. Oldbuck,' he said, 'I feel like a man who receives important tidings ere he is yet fully awake, and doubt whether they refer to actual life or are not rather a continuation of his dream. This woman — this Elspeth — she is in the extremity of age, and approaching in many respects to dotage. Have I not — it is a hideous question — have I not been hasty in the admission of her present evidence, against that which she formerly gave me to a very — very different purpose?'

Mr. Oldbuck paused a moment, and then answered with firmness — 'No, my lord, I cannot think you have any reason to suspect the truth of what she has told you last, from no apparent impulse but the urgency of conscience. Her confession was voluntary, disinterested, distinct, consistent with itself, and with all the other known circumstances of the case. I would lose no time, however, in examining and arranging the other documents to which she has referred, and I also think her own statement should be taken down, if possible, in a formal manner. We thought of setting about this together. But it will be a relief to your lordship, and, moreover, have a more impartial appearance, were I to attempt the investigation alone, in the capacity of a magistrate. I will do this — at least I will attempt it — so soon as I

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shall see her in a favourable state of mind to undergo an examination.'

Lord Glenallan wrung the Antiquary's hand in token of grateful acquiescence. 'I cannot express to you,' he said, 'Mr. Oldbuck, how much your countenance and coöperation in this dark and most melancholy business gives me relief and confidence. I cannot enough applaud myself for yielding to the sudden impulse which impelled me, as it were, to drag you into my confidence, and which arose from the experience I had formerly of your firmness in discharge of your duty as a magistrate and as a friend to the memory of the unfortunate. Whatever the issue of these matters may prove — and I would fain hope there is a dawn breaking on the fortunes of my house, though I shall not live to enjoy its light — but whatsoever be the issue, you have laid my family and me under the most lasting obligation.'

'My lord,' answered the Antiquary, 'I must necessarily have the greatest respect for your lordship's family, which I am well aware is one of the most ancient in Scotland, being certainly derived from Aymer de Geraldin, who sat in parliament at Perth, in the reign of Alexander II, and who, by the less vouched yet plausible tradition of the country, is said to have been descended from the Marmor of Clochnaben. Yet, with all my veneration for your ancient descent, I must acknowledge that I find myself still more bound to give your lordship what assistance is in my limited power, from sincere sympathy with your sorrows and detestation at the frauds which have so long been practised upon you. But, my lord, the matin meal is, I see, now prepared. Permit me to show your lordship the way through the intricacies of

my *cænobitium*, which is rather a combination of cells, jostled oddly together, and piled one upon the top of the other, than a regular house. I trust you will make yourself some amends for the spare diet of yesterday.'

But this was no part of Lord Glenallan's system. Having saluted the company with the grave and melancholy politeness which distinguished his manners, his servant placed before him a slice of toasted bread, with a glass of fair water, being the fare on which he usually broke his fast. While the morning's meal of the young soldier and the old Antiquary was despatched in a much more substantial manner, the noise of wheels was heard.

'Your lordship's carriage, I believe,' said Oldbuck, stepping to the window. 'On my word, a handsome *quadriga*, for such, according to the best *scholium*, was the *vox signata* of the Romans for a chariot which, like that of your lordship, was drawn by four horses.'

'And I will venture to say,' cried Hector, eagerly gazing from the window, 'that four handsomer or better matched bays never were put in harness. What fine forehands! What capital chargers they would make! Might I ask if they are of your lordship's own breeding?'

'I — I — rather believe so,' said Lord Glenallan; 'but I have been so negligent of my domestic matters that I am ashamed to say I must apply to Calvert' (looking at the domestic).

'They are of your lordship's own breeding,' said Calvert, 'got by Mad Tom out of Jemima and Yarico, your lordship's brood mares.'

'Are there more of the set?' said Lord Glenallan.

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‘Two, my lord — one rising four, the other five off this grass, both very handsome.’

‘Then let Dawkins bring them down to Monkbarns to-morrow,’ said the Earl. ‘I hope Captain M’Intyre will accept them, if they are at all fit for service.’

Captain M’Intyre’s eyes sparkled, and he was profuse in grateful acknowledgments; while Oldbuck, on the other hand, seizing the Earl’s sleeve, endeavoured to intercept a present which boded no good to his corn-chest and hay-loft.

‘My lord — my lord — much obliged — much obliged. But Hector is a pedestrian, and never mounts on horseback in battle. He is a Highland soldier, moreover, and his dress ill adapted for cavalry service. Even Macpherson never mounted his ancestors on horseback, though he has the impudence to talk of their being car-borne; and that, my lord, is what is running in Hector’s head: it is the vehicular, not the equestrian exercise, which he envies —

Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat.

His noddle is running on a curricule, which he has neither money to buy nor skill to drive if he had it; and I assure your lordship that the possession of two such quadrupeds would prove a greater scrape than any of his duels, whether with human foe or with my friend the *phoca*.’

‘You must command us all at present, Mr. Oldbuck,’ said the Earl, politely, ‘but I trust you will not ultimately prevent my gratifying my young friend in some way that may afford him pleasure?’

‘Anything useful, my lord,’ said Oldbuck, ‘but no *curriculum* : I protest he might as rationally propose to keep a *quadriga* at once. And, now I think of it, what is that old post-chaise from Fairport come jingling here for? I did not send for it.’

‘I did, sir,’ said Hector, rather sulkily, for he was not much gratified by his uncle’s interference to prevent the Earl’s intended generosity, nor particularly inclined to relish either the disparagement which he cast upon his skill as a charioteer or the mortifying allusion to his bad success in the adventures of the duel and the seal.

‘You did, sir?’ echoed the Antiquary, in answer to his concise information. ‘And pray, what may be your business with a post-chaise? Is this splendid equipage — this *biga*, as I may call it — to serve for an introduction to a *quadriga* or a *curriculum*?’

‘Really, sir,’ replied the young soldier, ‘if it be necessary to give you such a specific explanation, I am going to Fairport on a little business.’

‘Will you permit me to inquire into the nature of that business, Hector?’ answered his uncle, who loved the exercise of a little brief authority over his relative. ‘I should suppose any regimental affairs might be transacted by your worthy deputy the sergeant — an honest gentleman, who is so good as to make Monkbarns his home since his arrival among us — I should, I say, suppose that he may transact any business of yours, without your spending a day’s pay on two dog-horses and such a combination of rotten wood, cracked glass, and leather — such a skeleton of a post-chaise, as that before the door.’

‘It is not regimental business, sir, that calls me; and,

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since you insist upon knowing, I must inform you, Caxon has brought word this morning that old Ochiltree, the beggar, is to be brought up for examination to-day, previous to his being committed for trial; and I am going to see that the poor old fellow gets fair play — that's all.'

'Ay? I heard something of this, but could not think it serious. And pray, Captain Hector, who are so ready to be every man's second on all occasions of strife, civil or military, by land, by water, or on the sea-beach, what is your especial concern with old Edie Ochiltree?'

'He was a soldier in my father's company, sir,' replied Hector; 'and besides, when I was about to do a very foolish thing one day, he interfered to prevent me, and gave me almost as much good advice, sir, as you could have done yourself.'

'And with the same good effect, I dare be sworn for it — eh, Hector? Come, confess it was thrown away.'

'Indeed it was, sir; but I see no reason that my folly should make me less grateful for his intended kindness.'

'Bravo, Hector! that's the most sensible thing I ever heard you say; but always tell me your plans without reserve. Why, I will go with you myself, man; I am sure the old fellow is not guilty, and I will assist him in such a scrape much more effectually than you can do. Besides, it will save thee half-a-guinea, my lad, a consideration which I heartily pray you to have more frequently before your eyes.'

Lord Glenallan's politeness had induced him to turn away and talk with the ladies when the dispute between the uncle and nephew appeared to grow rather too animated to be fit for the ear of a stranger, but the Earl

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mingled again in the conversation when the placable tone of the Antiquary expressed amity. Having received a brief account of the mendicant, and of the accusation brought against him, which Oldbuck did not hesitate to ascribe to the malice of Dousterswivel, Lord Glenallan asked whether the individual in question had not been a soldier formerly. He was answered in the affirmative.

‘Had he not,’ continued his lordship, ‘a coarse blue coat or gown, with a badge? Was he not a tall, striking-looking old man, with grey beard and hair, who kept his body remarkably erect, and talked with an air of ease and independence which formed a strong contrast to his profession?’

‘All this is an exact picture of the man,’ returned Oldbuck.

‘Why, then,’ continued Lord Glenallan, ‘although I fear I can be of no use to him in his present condition, yet I owe him a debt of gratitude for being the first person who brought me some tidings of the utmost importance. I would willingly offer him a place of comfortable retirement when he is extricated from his present situation.’

‘I fear, my lord,’ said Oldbuck, ‘he would have difficulty in reconciling his vagrant habits to the acceptance of your bounty — at least I know the experiment has been tried without effect. To beg from the public at large he considers as independence, in comparison to drawing his whole support from the bounty of an individual. He is so far a true philosopher as to be a contemner of all ordinary rules of hours and times. When he is hungry he eats, when thirsty he drinks, when weary he sleeps, and with such indifference with respect to the

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means and appliances about which we make a fuss, that I suppose he was never ill-dined or ill-lodged in his life. Then he is, to a certain extent, the oracle of the district through which he travels — their genealogist, their newsman, their master of the revels, their doctor at a pinch, or their divine; I promise you he has too many duties, and is too zealous in performing them, to be easily bribed to abandon his calling. But I should be truly sorry if they sent the poor light-hearted old man to lie for weeks in a jail. I am convinced the confinement would break his heart.'

Thus finished the conference. Lord Glenallan, having taken leave of the ladies, renewed his offer to Captain M'Intyre of the freedom of his manors for sporting, which was joyously accepted.

'I can only add,' he said, 'that, if your spirits are not liable to be damped by dull company, Glenallan House is at all times open to you. On two days of the week, Friday and Saturday, I keep my apartment, which will be rather a relief to you, as you will be left to enjoy the society of my almoner, Mr. Gladsmoor, who is a scholar and a man of the world.'

Hector, his heart exulting at the thoughts of ranging through the preserves of Glenallan House, and over the well-protected moors of Clochnaben — nay, joy of joys, the deer-forest of Strathbonnel, made many acknowledgments of the honour and gratitude he felt. Mr. Oldbuck was sensible of the Earl's attention to his nephew; Miss M'Intyre was pleased because her brother was gratified; and Miss Griselda Oldbuck looked forward with glee to the potting of whole bags of moor-fowl and black-game, of which Mr. Blattergowl was a professed

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admirer. Thus — which is always the case when a man of rank leaves a private family where he has studied to appear obliging — all were ready to open in praise of the Earl as soon as he had taken his leave, and was wheeled off in his chariot by the four admired bays. But the panegyric was cut short, for Oldbuck and his nephew deposited themselves in the Fairport hack, which, with one horse trotting and the other urged to a canter, creaked, jingled, and hobbled towards that celebrated seaport, in a manner that formed a strong contrast to the rapidity and smoothness with which Lord Glenal-lan's equipage had seemed to vanish from their eyes.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Yes! I love justice well, as well as you do;
But since the good dame's blind, she shall excuse me
If, time and reason fitting, I prove dumb.
The breath I utter now shall be no means
To take away from me my breath in future.

Old Play.

By dint of charity from the town's people in aid of the load of provisions he had brought with him into durance, Edie Ochiltree had passed a day or two's confinement without much impatience, regretting his want of freedom the less as the weather proved broken and rainy.

'The prison,' he said, 'wasna sae dooms bad a place as it was ca'd. Ye had aye a good roof ower your head to fend aff the weather, and, if the windows werena glazed, it was the mair airy and pleasant for the summer season. And there were folk enow to crack wi', and he had bread enough to eat, and what need he fash himsell about the rest o't?'

The courage of our philosophical mendicant began, however, to abate when the sunbeams shone fair on the rusty bars of his grated dungeon, and a miserable linnet, whose cage some poor debtor had obtained permission to attach to the window, began to greet them with his whistle.

'Ye're in better spirits than I am,' said Edie, addressing the bird, 'for I can neither whistle nor sing for thinking o' the bonnie burnsidies and green shaws that I should hae been dandering beside in weather like this. But hae, there's some crumbs t' ye, an ye are sae merry;

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and troth ye hae some reason to sing an ye kent it, for your cage comes by nae faut o' your ain, and I may thank mysell that I am closed up in this weary place.'

Ochiltree's soliloquy was disturbed by a peace-officer, who came to summon him to attend the magistrate. So he set forth in awful procession, between two poor creatures, neither of them so stout as he was himself, to be conducted into the presence of inquisitorial justice. The people, as the aged prisoner was led along by his decrepit guards, exclaimed to each other, 'Eh! see sic a grey-haired man as that is, to have committed a highway robbery wi' ae fit in the grave!' And the children congratulated the officers, objects of their alternate dread and sport, Puggie Orrock and Jock Ormston, on having a prisoner as old as themselves.

Thus marshalled forward, Edie was presented (by no means for the first time) before the worshipful Bailie Littlejohn, who, contrary to what his name expressed, was a tall portly magistrate, on whom corporation crusts had not been conferred in vain. He was a zealous loyalist of that zealous time, somewhat rigorous and peremptory in the execution of his duty, and a good deal inflated with the sense of his own power and importance, otherwise an honest, well-meaning, and useful citizen.

'Bring him in, bring him in!' he exclaimed. 'Upon my word, these are awful and unnatural times: the very bedesmen and retainers of his Majesty are the first to break his laws. Here has been an old Blue-Gown committing robbery! I suppose the next will reward the royal charity, which supplies him with his garb, pension, and begging license, by engaging in high treason or sedition at least. But bring him in.'

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Edie made his obeisance, and then stood, as usual, firm and erect, with the side of his face turned a little upward, as if to catch every word which the magistrate might address to him. To the first general questions, which respected only his name and calling, the mendicant answered with readiness and accuracy; but when the magistrate, having caused his clerk to take down these particulars, began to inquire whereabouts the mendicant was on the night when Dousterswivel met with his misfortune, Edie demurred to the motion. 'Can ye tell me now, Bailie, you that understands the law, what gude will it do me to answer ony o' your questions?'

'Good? no good certainly, my friend, except that giving a true account of yourself, if you are innocent, may entitle me to set you at liberty.'

'But it seems mair reasonable to me, now, that you, Bailie, or ony body that has ony thing to say against me, should prove my guilt, and no to be bidding me prove my innocence.'

'I don't sit here,' answered the magistrate, 'to dispute points of law with you. I ask you, if you choose to answer my question, whether you were at Ringan Aikwood the forester's upon the day I have specified?'

'Really, sir, I dinna feel myself called on to remember,' replied the cautious bedesman.

'Or whether, in the course of that day or night,' continued the magistrate, 'you saw Steven, or Steenie, Mucklebackit? You knew him, I suppose?'

'O brawlie did I ken Steenie, puir fallow,' replied the prisoner; 'but I canna condeshend on ony particular time I have seen him lately.'

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‘Were you at the ruins of St. Ruth any time in the course of that evening?’

‘Bailie Littlejohn,’ said the mendicant, ‘if it be your honour’s pleasure, we’ll cut a lang tale short, and I’ll just tell ye I am no minded to answer ony o’ thae questions. I’m ower auld a traveller to let my tongue bring me into trouble.’

‘Write down,’ said the magistrate, ‘that he declines to answer all interrogatories, in respect that by telling the truth he might be brought to trouble.’

‘Na, na,’ said Ochiltree, ‘I’ll no hae that set down as ony part o’ my answer; but I just meant to say, that in a’ my memory and practice I never saw ony gude come o’ answering idle questions.’

‘Write down,’ said the Bailie, ‘that, being acquainted with judicial interrogatories by long practice, and having sustained injury by answering questions put to him on such occasions, the declarant refuses —’

‘Na, na, Bailie,’ reiterated Edie, ‘ye are no to come in on me that gait neither.’

‘Dictate the answer yourself then, friend,’ said the magistrate, ‘and the clerk will take it down from your own mouth.’

‘Ay, ay,’ said Edie, ‘that’s what I ca’ fair play; I’s’e do that without loss o’ time. Sae, neighbour, ye may just write down that Edie Ochiltree, the declarant, stands up for the liberty — na, I maunna say that neither, I am nae Liberty Boy; I hae fought again’ them in the riots in Dublin; besides, I have ate the king’s bread mony a day. Stay, let me see. Ay, write that Edie Ochiltree, the Blue-Gown, stands up for the prerogative — see that ye spell that word right, it’s a lang ane

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— for the prerogative of the subjects of the land, and winna answer a single word that sall be asked at him this day, unless he sees a reason for 't. Put down that, young man.'

'Then, Edie,' said the magistrate, 'since you will give me no information on the subject, I must send you back to prison till you shall be delivered in due course of law.'

'Aweel, sir, if it's Heaven's will and man's will, nae doubt I maun submit,' replied the mendicant. 'I hae nae great objection to the prison, only that a body canna win out o't; and if it wad please you as weel, Bailie, I wad gie you my word to appear afore the Lords at the Circuit, or in any other court ye like, on any day ye are pleased to appoint.'

'I rather think, my good friend,' answered Bailie Littlejohn, 'your word might be a slender security where your neck may be in some danger. I am apt to think you would suffer the pledge to be forfeited. If you could give me sufficient security, indeed —'

At this moment the Antiquary and Captain M'Intyre entered the apartment. 'Good morning to you, gentlemen,' said the magistrate; 'you find me toiling in my usual vocation, looking after the iniquities of the people; labouring for the *respublica*, Mr. Oldbuck; serving the king our master, Captain M'Intyre, for I suppose you know I have taken up the sword?'

'It is one of the emblems of justice, doubtless,' answered the Antiquary; 'but I should have thought the scales would have suited you better, Bailie, especially as you have them ready in the warehouse.'

'Very good, Monkbarns, excellent. But I do not take the sword up as justice, but as a soldier; indeed, I should

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rather say the musket and bayonet; there they stand at the elbow of my gouty chair, for I am scarce fit for drill yet. A slight touch of our old acquaintance podagra. I can keep my feet, however, while our sergeant puts me through the manual. I should like to know, Captain M'Intyre, if he follows the regulations correctly; he brings us but awkwardly to the "present." And he hobbled towards his weapon to illustrate his doubts and display his proficiency.

'I rejoice we have such zealous defenders, Bailie,' replied Mr. Oldbuck; 'and I daresay Hector will gratify you by communicating his opinion on your progress in this new calling. Why, you rival the Hecate of the ancients, my good sir — a merchant on the mart, a magistrate in the town-house, a soldier on the links; *quid non pro patria?* But my business is with the justice; so let commerce and war go slumber.'

'Well, my good sir,' said the Bailie, 'and what commands have you for me?'

'Why, here's an old acquaintance of mine, called Edie Ochiltree, whom some of your myrmidons have mewed up in jail on account of an alleged assault on that fellow Dousterswivel, of whose accusation I do not believe one word.'

The magistrate here assumed a very grave countenance. 'You ought to have been informed that he is accused of robbery as well as assault — a very serious matter indeed; it is not often such criminals come under my cognizance.'

'And,' replied Oldbuck, 'you are tenacious of the opportunity of making the very most of such as occur. But is this poor old man's case really so very bad?'

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‘It is rather out of rule,’ said the Bailie, ‘but, as you are in the commission, Monkbarns, I have no hesitation to show you Dousterswivel’s declaration and the rest of the precognition.’ And he put the papers into the Antiquary’s hands, who assumed his spectacles and sat down in a corner to peruse them.

The officers in the meantime had directions to remove their prisoner into another apartment; but before they could do so M’Intyre took an opportunity to greet old Edie and to slip a guinea into his hand.

‘Lord bless your honour,’ said the old man; ‘it’s a young soldier’s gift, and it should surely thrive wi’ an auld ane. I’se no refuse it, though it’s beyond my rules; for, if they steek me up here, my friends are like enough to forget me: “Out o’ sight out o’ mind” is a true proverb. And it wadna be creditable for me, that am the king’s bedesman, and entitled to beg by word of mouth, to be fishing for bawbees out at the jail window wi’ the fit o’ a stocking and a string.’ As he made this observation he was conducted out of the apartment.

Mr. Dousterswivel’s declaration contained an exaggerated account of the violence he had sustained and also of his loss.

‘But what I should have liked to have asked him,’ said Monkbarns, ‘would have been his purpose in frequenting the ruins of St. Ruth, so lonely a place, at such an hour, and with such a companion as Edie Ochiltree. There is no road lies that way, and I do not conceive a mere passion for the picturesque would carry the German thither in such a night of storm and wind. Depend upon it, he has been about some roguery, and in all

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probability hath been caught in a trap of his own setting; *nec lex justitior ulla.*'

The magistrate allowed there was something mysterious in that circumstance, and apologised for not pressing Dousterswivel, as his declaration was voluntarily emitted. But for the support of the main charge he showed the declaration of the Aikwoods concerning the state in which Dousterswivel was found, and establishing the important fact that the mendicant had left the barn in which he was quartered, and did not return to it again. Two people belonging to the Fairport undertaker, who had that night been employed in attending the funeral of Lady Glenallan, had also given declarations that, being sent to pursue two suspicious persons who left the ruins of St. Ruth as the funeral approached, and who, it was supposed, might have been pillaging some of the ornaments prepared for the ceremony, they had lost and regained sight of them more than once, owing to the nature of the ground, which was unfavourable for riding, but had at length fairly lodged them both in Mucklebackit's cottage. And one of the men added, that 'he, the declarant, having dismounted from his horse and gone close up to the window of the hut, he saw the old Blue-Gown and young Steenie Mucklebackit, with others, eating and drinking in the inside, and also observed the said Steenie Mucklebackit show a pocket-book to the others; and declarant has no doubt that Ochiltree and Steenie Mucklebackit were the persons whom he and his comrade had pursued, as above mentioned.' And being interrogated why he did not enter the said cottage, declares, 'he had no warrant so to do; and that, as Mucklebackit and his family were under-

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stood to be rough-handed folk, he, the declarant, had no desire to meddle or make with their affairs. *Causa scientiæ patet*. All which he declares to be truth,' etc.

'What do you say to that body of evidence against your friend?' said the magistrate, when he had observed the Antiquary had turned the last leaf.

'Why, were it in the case of any other person, I own I should say it looked *prima facie* a little ugly; but I cannot allow anybody to be in the wrong for beating Douterswivel. Had I been an hour younger, or had but one single flash of your warlike genius, Bailie, I should have done it myself long ago. He is *nebulo nebulonum*, an impudent, fraudulent, mendacious quack, that has cost me a hundred pounds by his roguery; and my neighbour, Sir Arthur, God knows how much. And besides, Bailie, I do not hold him to be a sound friend to government.'

'Indeed?' said Bailie Littlejohn; 'if I thought that, it would alter the question considerably.'

'Right; for in beating him,' observed Oldbuck, 'the bedesman must have shown his gratitude to the king by thumping his enemy; and in robbing him he would only have plundered an Egyptian, whose wealth it is lawful to spoil. Now, suppose this interview in the ruins of St. Ruth had relation to politics, and this story of hidden treasure and so forth was a bribe from the other side of the water for some great man, or the funds destined to maintain a seditious club?'

'My dear sir,' said the magistrate, catching at the idea, 'you hit my very thoughts! How fortunate should I be if I could become the humble means of sifting such a matter to the bottom! Don't you think we had better call out the volunteers and put them on duty?'

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‘Not just yet, while podagra deprives them of an essential member of their body. But will you let me examine Ochiltree?’

‘Certainly; but you’ll make nothing of him. He gave me distinctly to understand he knew the danger of a judicial declaration on the part of an accused person, which, to say the truth, has hanged many an honest man than he is.’

‘Well, but Bailie,’ continued Oldbuck, ‘you have no objection to let me try him?’

‘None in the world, Monkbarns. I hear the sergeant below, I’ll rehearse the manual in the meanwhile. Baby, carry my gun and bayonet down to the room below; it makes less noise there when we ground arms.’ And so exit the martial magistrate, with his maid behind him bearing his weapons.

‘A good squire that wench for a gouty champion,’ observed Oldbuck. ‘Hector, my lad, hook on, hook on. Go with him, boy; keep him employed, man, for half an hour or so; butter him with some warlike terms; praise his dress and address.’

Captain M’Intyre, who, like many of his profession, looked down with infinite scorn on those citizen soldiers who had assumed arms without any professional title to bear them, rose with great reluctance, observing that he should not know what to say to Mr. Littlejohn, and that to see an old gouty shopkeeper attempting the exercise and duties of a private soldier was really too ridiculous.

‘It may be so, Hector,’ said the Antiquary, who seldom agreed with any person in the immediate proposition which was laid down, ‘it may possibly be so in this and some other instances; but at present the coun-

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try resembles the suitors in a small-debt court, where parties plead in person for lack of cash to retain the professed heroes of the bar. I am sure in the one case we never regret the want of the acuteness and eloquence of the lawyers; and so, I hope, in the other we may manage to make shift with our hearts and muskets, though we shall lack some of the discipline of you martinets.'

'I have no objection, I am sure, sir, that the whole world should fight if they please, if they will but allow me to be quiet,' said Hector, rising with dogged reluctance.

'Yes, you are a very quiet personage indeed,' said his uncle, 'whose ardour for quarrelling cannot pass so much as a poor *phoca* sleeping upon the beach!'

But Hector, who saw which way the conversation was tending, and hated all allusions to the foil he had sustained from the fish, made his escape before the Antiquary concluded the sentence.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Well, well, at worst, 't is neither theft nor coinage,
Granting I knew all that you charged me with.
What, tho' the tomb hath borne a second birth,
And given the wealth to one that knew not on't,
Yet fair exchange was never robbery,
Far less pure bounty.

Old Play.

THE Antiquary, in order to avail himself of the permission given him to question the accused party, chose rather to go to the apartment in which Ochiltree was detained than to make the examination appear formal by bringing him again into the magistrate's office. He found the old man seated by a window which looked out on the sea; and as he gazed on that prospect large tears found their way, as if unconsciously, to his eye, and from thence trickled down his cheeks and white beard. His features were, nevertheless, calm and composed, and his whole posture and mien indicated patience and resignation. Oldbuck had approached him without being observed, and roused him out of his musing by saying kindly, 'I am sorry, Edie, to see you so much cast down about this matter.'

The mendicant started, dried his eyes very hastily with the sleeve of his gown, and, endeavouring to recover his usual tone of indifference and jocularity, answered, but with a voice more tremulous than usual, 'I might weel hae judged, Monkbarns, it was you, or the like o' you, was coming in to disturb me; for it's ae great advantage o' prisons and courts o' justice, that ye may

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greet your een out an ye like, and nane o' the folk that's concerned about them will ever ask you what it's for.'

'Well, Edie,' replied Oldbuck, 'I hope your present cause of distress is not so bad but it may be removed.'

'And I had hoped, Monkbarns,' answered the mendicant in a tone of reproach, 'that ye had kend me better than to think that this bit trifling trouble o' my ain wad bring tears into my auld een, that hae seen far different kind o' distress. Na, na! But here's been the puir lass, Caxon's daughter, seeking comfort, and has gotten unco little. There's been nae speerings o' Taffril's gun-brig since the last gale; and folk report on the key that a king's ship had struck on the Reef of Rattray, and a' hands lost. God forbid! for as sure as you live, Monkbarns, the puir lad Lovel, that ye liked sae weel, must have perished.'

'God forbid, indeed!' echoed the Antiquary, turning pale; 'I would rather Monkbarns House were on fire. My poor dear friend and coadjutor! I will down to the quay instantly.'

'I'm sure ye'll learn naething mair than I hae tauld ye, sir,' said Ochiltree, 'for the officer-folk here were very civil — that is, for the like o' them — and lookit up a' their letters and authorities, and could thraw nae light on't either ae way or another.'

'It can't be true, it shall not be true,' said the Antiquary, 'and I won't believe it if it were. Taffril's an excellent seaman, and Lovel — my poor Lovel! — has all the qualities of a safe and pleasant companion by land or by sea — one, Edie, whom, from the ingenuousness of his disposition, I would choose, did I ever go a sea voyage — which I never do, unless across the ferry

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— *fragilem-mecum solvere phaselum*, to be the companion of my risk, as one against whom the elements could nourish no vengeance. No, Edie, it is not and cannot be true: it is a fiction of the idle jade Rumour, whom I wish hanged with her trumpet about her neck, that serves only with its screech-owl tones to fright honest folks out of their senses. Let me know how you got into this scrape of your own.'

'Are ye axing me as a magistrate, Monkbarns, or is it just for your ain satisfaction?'

'For my own satisfaction solely,' replied the Antiquary.

'Put up your pocket-book and your keelyvine pen, then, for I downa speak out an ye hae writing materials in your hands; they're a scaur to unlearned folk like me. Od, ane o' the clerks in the neist room will clink down in black and white as muckle as wad hang a man before ane kens what he's saying.'

Monkbarns complied with the old man's humour, and put up his memorandum-book.

Edie then went with great frankness through the part of the story already known to the reader, informing the Antiquary of the scene which he had witnessed between Dousterswivel and his patron in the ruins of St. Ruth, and frankly confessing that he could not resist the opportunity of decoying the adept once more to visit the tomb of Misticot, with the purpose of taking a comic revenge upon him for his quackery. He had easily persuaded Steenie, who was a bold thoughtless young fellow, to engage in the frolic along with him, and the jest had been inadvertently carried a great deal farther than was designed. Concerning the pocket-book, he explained

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that he had expressed his surprise and sorrow as soon as he found it had been inadvertently brought off; and that publicly, before all the inmates of the cottage, Steenie had undertaken to return it the next day, and had only been prevented by his untimely fate.

The Antiquary pondered a moment, and then said, 'Your account seems very probable, Edie, and I believe it from what I know of the parties; but I think it likely that you know a great deal more than you have thought it proper to tell me about this matter of the treasure-trove. I suspect you have acted the part of the *Lar Familiaris* in Plautus — a sort of brownie, Edie, to speak to your comprehension, who watched over hidden treasures. I do bethink me you were the first person we met when Sir Arthur made his successful attack upon Misticot's grave, and also that, when the labourers began to flag, you, Edie, were again the first to leap into the trench and to make the discovery of the treasure. Now you must explain all this to me, unless you would have me use you as ill as Euclio does Staphyla in the *Aulularia*.'

'Lordsake, sir,' replied the mendicant, 'what do I ken about your Howlowlaria? it's mair like a dog's language than a man's.'

'You knew, however, of the box of treasure being there?' continued Oldbuck.

'Dear sir,' answered Edie, assuming a countenance of great simplicity, 'what likelihood is there o' that? D'ye think sae puir an auld creature as me wad hae kend o' sic a like thing without getting some gude out o't? And ye wot weel I sought nane and gat nane, like Michael Scott's man. What concern could I hae wi't?'

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‘That’s just what I want you to explain to me,’ said Oldbuck; ‘for I am positive you knew it was there.’

‘Your honour’s a positive man, Monkbarns; and, for a positive man, I must needs allow ye’re often in the right.’

‘You allow then, Edie, that **my belief is well founded?**’

Edie nodded acquiescence.

‘Then please to explain to me the whole affair from beginning to end,’ said the Antiquary.

‘If it were a secret o’ mine, Monkbarns,’ replied the beggar, ‘ye suldna ask twice; for I hae aye said ahint your back that, for a’ the nonsense maggots that ye whiles take into your head, ye are the maist wise and discreet o’ a’ our country gentles. But I’se e’en be open-hearted wi’ you and tell you that this is a friend’s secret, and that they suld draw me wi’ wild horses, or saw me asunder, as they did the children of Ammon, sooner than I would speak a word mair about the matter, excepting this, that there was nae ill intended, but muckle gude, and that the purpose was to serve them that are worth twenty hundred o’ me. But there’s nae law, I trow, that makes it a sin to ken where ither folks’ siller is, if we dinna pit hand till’t oursell?’

Oldbuck walked once or twice up and down the room in profound thought, endeavouring to find some plausible reason for transactions of a nature so mysterious, but his ingenuity was totally at fault. He then placed himself before the prisoner.

‘This story of yours, friend Edie, is an absolute enigma, and would require a second Œdipus to solve it. Who Œdipus was I will tell you some other time, if you remind me. However, whether it be owing to the wis-

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dom or to the maggots with which you compliment me, I am strongly disposed to believe that you have spoken the truth, the rather that you have not made any of those obtestations of the superior powers which I observe you and your comrades always make use of when you mean to deceive folks. (Here Edie could not suppress a smile.) If, therefore, you will answer me one question, I will endeavour to procure your liberation.'

'If ye'll let me hear the question,' said Edie, with the caution of a canny Scotchman, 'I'll tell you whether I'll answer it or no.'

'It is simply,' said the Antiquary, 'Did Dousterswivel know anything about the concealment of the chest of bullion?'

'He, the ill-fa'ard loon!' answered Edie, with much frankness of manner, 'there wad hae been little speerings o't had Dustansnível kend it was there; it wad hae been butter in the black dog's hause.'

'I thought as much,' said Oldbuck. 'Well, Edie, if I procure your freedom, you must keep your day and appear to clear me of the bail-bond, for these are not times for prudent men to incur forfeitures, unless you can point out another *aulam auri plenam quadrilibrem* — another "Search No. I."'

'Ah!' said the beggar, shaking his head, 'I doubt the bird's flown that laid thae golden eggs; for I winna ca' her goose, though that's the gait it stands in the story-buick. But I'll keep my day, Monkbarns; ye'se no loss a penny by me. And troth I wad fain be out again, now the weather's fine; and then I hae the best chance o' hearing the first news o' my friends.'

'Well, Edie, as the bouncing and thumping beneath

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has somewhat ceased, I presume Bailie Littlejohn has dismissed his military preceptor, and has retired from the labours of Mars to those of Themis: I will have some conversation with him. But I cannot and will not believe any of those wretched news you were telling me.'

'God send your honour may be right!' said the mendicant, as Oldbuck left the room.

The Antiquary found the magistrate, exhausted with the fatigues of the drill, reposing in his gouty chair, humming the air, 'How merrily we live that soldiers be!' and between each bar comforting himself with a spoonful of mock-turtle soup. He ordered a similar refreshment for Oldbuck, who declined it, observing that, not being a military man, he did not feel inclined to break his habit of keeping regular hours for meals. 'Soldiers like you, Bailie, must snatch their food as they find means and time. But I am sorry to hear ill news of young Taffril's brig.'

'Ah, poor fellow!' said the Bailie, 'he was a credit to the town, much distinguished on the first of June.'

'But,' said Oldbuck, 'I am shocked to hear you talk of him in the preterite tense.'

'Troth, I fear there may be too much reason for it, Monkbarns; and yet let us hope the best. The accident is said to have happened in the Rattray reef of rocks, about twenty miles to the northward, near Dirtenalan Bay. I have sent to inquire about it; and your nephew run out himself as if he had been flying to get the gazette of a victory.'

Here Hector entered, exclaiming as he came in, 'I believe it's all a damned lie; I can't find the least authority for it but general rumour.'

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‘And pray, Mr. Hector,’ said his uncle, ‘if it had been true, whose fault would it have been that Lovel was on board?’

‘Not mine, I am sure,’ answered Hector; ‘it would have been only my misfortune.’

‘Indeed!’ said his uncle; ‘I should not have thought of that.’

‘Why, sir, with all your inclination to find me in the wrong,’ replied the young soldier, ‘I suppose you will own my intention was not to blame in this case. I did my best to hit Lovel, and if I had been successful, ’t is clear my scrape would have been his and his scrape would have been mine.’

‘And whom or what do you intend to hit now, that you are lugging with you that leathern magazine there, marked “gunpowder”?’

‘I must be prepared for Lord Glenallan’s moors on the twelfth, sir,’ said M’Intyre.

‘Ah, Hector! thy great *chasse*, as the French call it, would take place best —

Omne cum Proteus pecus egit altos
Visere montes.

Could you meet but with a martial *phoca*, instead of an unwarlike heath-bird.’

‘The devil take the seal, sir, or *phoca*, if you choose to call it so; it’s rather hard one can never hear the end of a little piece of folly like that.’

‘Well, well,’ said Oldbuck, ‘I am glad you have the grace to be ashamed of it. As I detest the whole race of Nimrods, I wish them all as well matched. Nay, never start off at a jest, man; I have done with the *phoca*,

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though I daresay the Bailie could tell us the value of sealskins just now.'

'They are up,' said the magistrate, 'they are well up; the fishing has been unsuccessful lately.'

'We can bear witness to that,' said the tormenting Antiquary, who was delighted with the hank this incident had given him over the young sportsman. 'One word more, Hector, and

We'll hang a sealskin on thy recreant limbs.

Aha, my boy! Come, never mind it, I must go to business. Bailie, a word with you; you must take bail — moderate bail, you understand — for old Ochiltree's appearance.'

'You don't consider what you ask,' said the Bailie; 'the offence is assault and robbery.'

'Hush! not a word about it,' said the Antiquary. 'I gave you a hint before; I will possess you more fully hereafter; I promise you there is a secret.'

'But, Mr. Oldbuck, if the state is concerned, I, who do the whole drudgery business here, really have a title to be consulted and until I am —'

'Hush! hush!' said the Antiquary, winking and putting his finger to his nose; 'you shall have the full credit, the entire management, whenever matters are ripe. But this is an obstinate old fellow, who will not hear of two people being as yet let into his mystery, and he has not fully acquainted me with the clue to Dousterswivel's devices.'

'Aha! so we must tip that fellow the alien act, I suppose?'

'To say truth, I wish you would.'

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‘Say no more,’ said the magistrate, ‘it shall forthwith be done; he shall be removed *tanquam suspect* — I think that’s one of your own phrases, Monkbarns?’

‘It is classical, Bailie; you improve.’

‘Why, public business has of late pressed upon me so much that I have been obliged to take my foreman into partnership. I have had two several correspondences with the Under Secretary of State — one on the proposed tax on Riga hemp-seed and the other on putting down political societies. So you might as well communicate to me as much as you know of this old fellow’s discovery of a plot against the state.’

‘I will instantly when I am master of it,’ replied Oldbuck; ‘I hate the trouble of managing such matters myself. Remember, however, I did not say decidedly a plot against the state; I only say, I hope to discover, by this man’s means, a foul plot.’

‘If it be a plot at all, there must be treason in it, or sedition at least,’ said the Bailie. ‘Will you bail him for four hundred merks?’

‘Four hundred merks for an old Blue-Gown! Think on the act 1701 regulating bail-bonds! Strike off a cipher from the sum; I am content to bail him for forty merks.’

‘Well, Mr. Oldbuck, everybody in Fairport is always willing to oblige you; and besides, I know that you are a prudent man, and one that would be as unwilling to lose forty as four hundred merks. So I will accept your bail *meo periculo*; what say you to that law phrase again? I had it from a learned counsel: “I will vouch it, my lord,” he said, “*meo periculo*.”’

‘And I will vouch for Edie Ochiltree *meo periculo*, in

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like manner,' said Oldbuck. 'So let your clerk draw out the bail-bond and I will sign it.'

When this ceremony had been performed, the Anti-quary communicated to Edie the joyful tidings that he was once more at liberty, and directed him to make the best of his way to Monkbarns House, to which he himself returned with his nephew, after having perfected their good work.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Full of wise saws and modern instances.

As You Like It.

‘I WISH to Heaven, Hector,’ said the Antiquary, next morning after breakfast, ‘you would spare our nerves, and not be keeping snapping that arquebuss of yours.’

‘Well, sir, I’m sure I’m sorry to disturb you,’ said his nephew, still handling his fowling-piece; ‘but it’s a capital gun: it’s a Joe Manton, that cost forty guineas.’

‘A fool and his money are soon parted, nephew: there is a Joe Miller for your Joe Manton,’ answered the Antiquary. ‘I am glad you have so many guineas to throw away.’

‘Every one has their fancy, uncle: you are fond of books.’

‘Ay, Hector,’ said the uncle, ‘and if my collection were yours, you would make it fly to the gunsmith, the horse-market, the dog-breaker: *coemptos undique nobiles libros mutare loricis Iberis.*’

‘I could not use your books, my dear uncle,’ said the young soldier, ‘that’s true; and you will do well to provide for their being in better hands; but don’t let the faults of my head fall on my heart: I would not part with a Cordery that belonged to an old friend to get a set of horses like Lord Glenallan’s.’

‘I don’t think you would, lad — I don’t think you would,’ said his softening relative. ‘I love to tease you a little sometimes; it keeps up the spirit of discipline and

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habit of subordination. You will pass your time happily here having me to command you, instead of captain, or colonel, or "knight in arms," as Milton has it; and instead of the French,' he continued, relapsing into his ironical humour, 'you have the *gens humida ponti*; for, as Virgil says,

Sternunt se somno diversæ in littore phocæ,

which might be rendered,

Here *phocæ* slumber on the beach,
Within our Highland Hector's reach.

Nay, if you grow angry I have done. Besides, I see old Edie in the courtyard, with whom I have business. Good-bye, Hector. Do you remember how she splashed into the sea like her master Proteus, *et se jactu dedit æquor in altum?*'

M'Intyre — waiting, however, till the door was shut — then gave way to the natural impatience of his temper.

'My uncle is the best man in the world, and in his way the kindest; but rather than hear any more about that cursed *phoca*, as he is pleased to call it, I would exchange for the West Indies and never see his face again.'

Miss M'Intyre, gratefully attached to her uncle and passionately fond of her brother, was on such occasions the usual envoy of reconciliation. She hastened to meet her uncle on his return before he entered the parlour.

'Well, now, Miss Womankind, what is the meaning of that imploring countenance? Has Juno done any more mischief?'

'No, uncle; but Juno's master is in such fear of your

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joking him about the seal. I assure you, he feels it much more than you would wish; it's very silly of him, to be sure; but then you can turn everybody so sharply into ridicule —'

'Well, my dear,' answered Oldbuck, propitiated by the compliment, 'I will rein in my satire, and, if possible, speak no more of the *phoca*; I will not even speak of sealing a letter, but say "umph," and give a nod to you when I want the wax-light. I am not *monitoribus asper*, but, Heaven knows, the most mild, quiet, and easy of human beings, whom sister, niece, and nephew guide just as best pleases them.'

With this little panegyric on his own docility, Mr. Oldbuck entered the parlour, and proposed to his nephew a walk to the Mussel Crag. 'I have some questions to ask of a woman at Mucklebackit's cottage,' he observed, 'and I would willingly have a sensible witness with me; so, for fault of a better, Hector, I must be contented with you.'

'There is old Edie, sir, or Caxon; could not they do better than me?' answered M'Intyre, feeling somewhat alarmed at the prospect of a long *tête-à-tête* with his uncle.

'Upon my word, young man, you turn me over to pretty companions, and I am quite sensible of your politeness,' replied Mr. Oldbuck. 'No, sir, I intend the old Blue-Gown shall go with me, not as a competent witness, for he is at present, as our friend Bailie Littlejohn says — blessings on his learning! — *tanquam suspectus*, and you are *suspicionem major*, as our law has it.'

'I wish I were a major, sir,' said Hector, catching only the last, and, to a soldier's ear, the most impressive word

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in the sentence; 'but, without money or interest, there is little chance of getting the step.'

'Well, well, most doughty son of Priam,' said the Antiquary, 'be ruled by your friends, and there's no saying what may happen. Come away with me, and you shall see what may be useful to you should you ever sit upon a court-martial, sir.'

'I have been on many a regimental court-martial, sir,' answered Captain M'Intyre. 'But here's a new cane for you.'

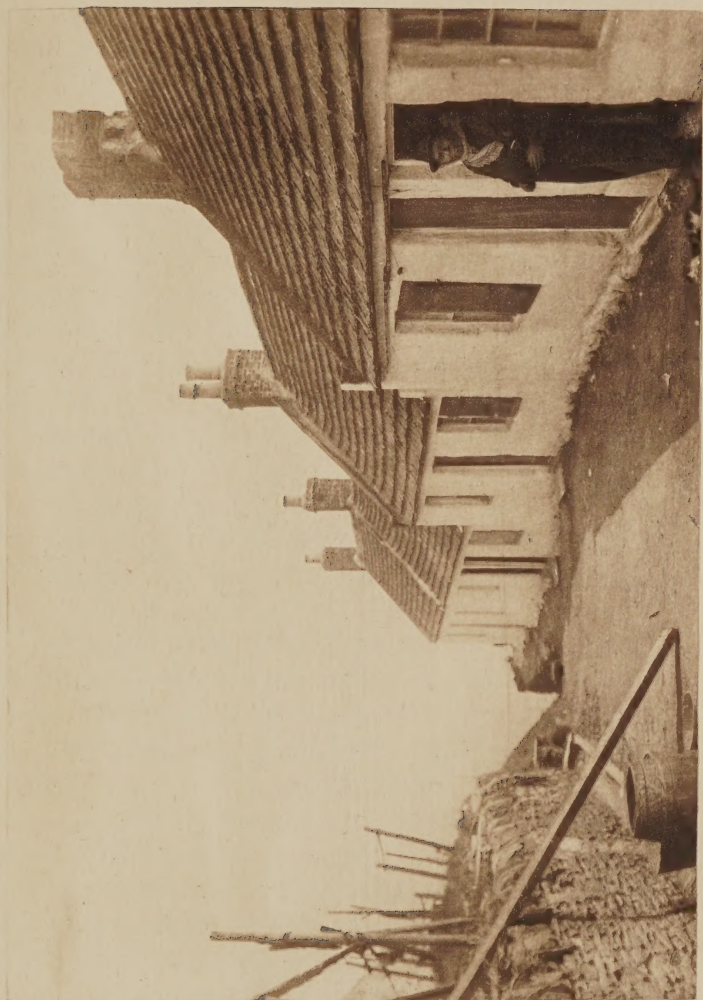
'Much obliged, much obliged.'

'I bought it from our drum-major,' added M'Intyre, 'who came into our regiment from the Bengal army when it came down the Red Sea. It was cut on the banks of the Indus, I assure you.'

'Upon my word, 't is a fine ratan, and well replaces that which the *ph* — Bah! what was I going to say?'

The party, consisting of the Antiquary, his nephew, and the old beggar, now took the sands towards Mussel Crag — the former in the very highest mood of communicating information, and the others, under a sense of former obligation and some hope for future favours, decently attentive to receive it. The uncle and nephew walked together, the mendicant about a step and a half behind, just near enough for his patron to speak to him by a slight inclination of his neck, and without the trouble of turning round. Petrie, in his essay on *Good-breeding*, dedicated to the magistrates of Edinburgh, recommends, upon his own experience as tutor in a family of distinction, this attitude to all led captains, tutors, dependents, and bottle-holders of every description. Thus escorted, the Antiquary moved along full of his

Auchmithie



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learning, like a lordly man of war, and every now and then yawing to starboard and larboard to discharge a broadside upon his followers.

‘And so it is your opinion,’ said he to the mendicant, ‘that this windfall — this *arca auri*, as Plautus has it — will not greatly avail Sir Arthur in his necessities?’

‘Unless he could find ten times as much,’ said the beggar, ‘and that I am sair doubtful of. I heard Puggie Orrock and the tother thief of a sheriff-officer or messenger speaking about it, and things are ill aff when the like o’ them can speak crouselly about ony gentleman’s affairs. I doubt Sir Arthur will be in stane wa’s for debt unless there’s swift help and certain.’

‘You speak like a fool,’ said the Antiquary. ‘Nephew, it is a remarkable thing that in this happy country no man can be legally imprisoned for debt.’

‘Indeed, sir?’ said M’Intyre. ‘I never knew that before; that part of our law would suit some of our mess well.’

‘And if they arena confined for debt,’ said Ochiltree, ‘what is’t that tempts sae mony puir creatures to bide in the tolbooth o’ Fairport yonder? They a’ say they were put there by their creditors. Od! they maun like it better than I do if they’re there o’ free will.’

‘A very natural observation, Edie, and many of your betters would make the same; but it is founded entirely upon ignorance of the feudal system. Hector, be so good as to attend, unless you are looking out for another — Ahem! (Hector compelled himself to give attention at this hint.) And you, Edie, it may be useful to you, *rerum cognoscere causas*. The nature and origin of warrant for caption is a thing *haud alienum a Scævolaë studiis*. You

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must know then, once more, that nobody can be arrested in Scotland for debt.'

'I haena muckle concern wi' that, Monkbarns,' said the old man, 'for naebody wad trust a bodle to a gaberlunzie.'

'I pr'ythee peace, man. As a compulsitor, therefore, of payment — that being a thing to which no debtor is naturally inclined, as I have too much reason to warrant from the experience I have had with my own — we had first the letters of four forms, a sort of gentle invitation, by which our sovereign lord the king, interesting himself, as a monarch should, in the regulation of his subjects' private affairs, at first by mild exhortation and afterwards by letters of more strict enjoinder and more hard compulsion — What do you see extraordinary about that bird, Hector? it's but a sea-maw.'

'It's a pictarnie, sir,' said Edie.

'Well, what an if it were — what does that signify at present? But I see you're impatient; so I will waive the letters of four forms, and come to the modern process of diligence. You suppose, now, a man's committed to prison because he cannot pay his debt? Quite otherwise; the truth is, the king is so good as to interfere at the request of the creditor, and to send the debtor his royal command to do him justice within a certain time — fifteen days, or six, as the case may be. Well, the man resists and disobeys; what follows? Why, that he be lawfully and rightfully declared a rebel to our gracious sovereign, whose command he has disobeyed, and that by three blasts of a horn at the market-place of Edinburgh, the metropolis of Scotland. And he is then legally imprisoned, not on account of any civil debt, but

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because of his ungrateful contempt of the royal mandate. What say you to that, Hector? there's something you never knew before.'¹

'No, uncle; but I own, if I wanted money to pay my debts, I would rather thank the king to send me some than to declare me a rebel for not doing what I could not do.'

'Your education has not led you to consider these things,' replied his uncle; 'you are incapable of estimating the elegance of the legal fiction, and the manner in which it reconciles that duress which, for the protection of commerce, it has been found necessary to extend towards refractory debtors with the most scrupulous attention to the liberty of the subject.'

'I don't know, sir,' answered the unenlightened Hector; 'but if a man must pay his debt or go to jail, it signifies but little whether he goes as a debtor or a rebel, I should think. But you say this command of the king's gives a license of so many days; now, egad, were I in the scrape, I would beat a march and leave the king and the creditor to settle it among themselves before they came to extremities.'

'So wad I,' said Edie; 'I wad gie them leg-bail to a certainty.'

'True,' replied Monkbarns; 'but those whom the law suspects of being unwilling to abide her formal visit, she proceeds with by means of a shorter and more uncere-
monious call, as dealing with persons on whom patience and favour would be utterly thrown away.'

'Ay,' said Ochiltree, 'that will be what they ca' the "fugie" warrants; I hae some skeel in them. There's

¹ See Note 1.

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Border warrants too in the south country, unco rash uncanny things. I was taen up on ane at Saint James's Fair, and keepit in the auld kirk at Kelso the haill day and night; and a cauld goustie place it was, I'se assure ye. But whatna wife's this, wi' her creel on her back? It's puir Maggie hersell, I'm thinking.'

It was so. The poor woman's sense of her loss, if not diminished, was become at least mitigated by the inevitable necessity of attending to the means of supporting her family; and her salutation to Oldbuck was made in an odd mixture between the usual language of solicitation with which she plied her customers and the tone of lamentation for her recent calamity.

'How's a' wi' ye the day, Monkbarns? I havena had the grace yet to come down to thank your honour for the credit ye did puir Steenie, wi' laying his head in a rath grave, puir fallow.' Here she whimpered and wiped her eyes with the corner of her blue apron. 'But the fishing comes on no that ill, though the gudeman hasna had the heart to gang to sea himsell. Atweel I wad fain tell him it wad do him gude to put hand to wark, but I'm maist fear'd to speak to him, and it's an unco thing to hear ane o' us speak that gate o' a man. However, I hae some dainty caller haddies, and they sall be but three shillings the dozen, for I hae nae pith to drive a bargain e'ennow, and maun just take what ony Christian body will gie, wi' few words and nae flyting.'

'What shall we do, Hector?' said Oldbuck, pausing; 'I got into disgrace with my womankind for making a bad bargain with her before. These maritime animals, Hector, are unlucky to our family.'

'Pooh, sir, what would you do? Give poor Maggie

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what she asks, or allow me to send a dish of fish up to Monkbarns.'

And he held out the money to her; but Maggie drew back her hand. 'Na, na, Captain; ye're ower young and ower free o' your siller. Ye should never tak a fish-wife's first bode; and troth I think maybe a flyte wi' the auld housekeeper at Monkbarns or Miss Grizel would do me some gude. And I want to see what that hellicate quean Jenny Rintherout's doing; folk said she wasna weel. She'll be vexing herself about Steenie, the silly tawpie, as if he wad ever hae lookit ower his shouther at the like o' her! Weel, Monkbarns, they're braw caller haddies, and they'll bid me unco little indeed at the house if ye want crappit-heads the day.'

And so on she paced with her burden — grief, gratitude for the sympathy of her betters, and the habitual love of traffic and of gain chasing each other through her thoughts.

'And now that we are before the door of their hut,' said Ochiltree, 'I wad fain ken, Monkbarns, what has gar'd ye plague yoursell wi' me a' this length? I tell ye sincerely I hae nae pleasure in ganging in there. I downa bide to think how the young hae fa'en on a' sides o' me, and left me an useless auld stump wi' hardly a green leaf on't.'

'This old woman,' said Oldbuck, 'sent you on a message to the Earl of Glenallan, did she not?'

'Ay!' said the surprised mendicant; 'how ken ye that sae weel?'

'Lord Glenallan told me himself,' answered the Antiquary; 'so there is no delation — no breach of trust on your part, and as he wishes me to take her evidence down on some important family matters, I chose to

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bring you with me, because in her situation, hovering between dotage and consciousness, it is possible that your voice and appearance may awaken trains of recollection which I should otherwise have no means of exciting. The human mind — What are you about, Hector?’

‘I was only whistling for the dog, sir,’ replied the Captain; ‘she always roves too wide. I knew I should be troublesome to you.’

‘Not at all, not at all,’ said Oldbuck, resuming the subject of his disquisition. ‘The human mind is to be treated like a skein of ravelled silk, where you must cautiously secure one free end before you can make any progress in disentangling it.’

‘I ken naething about that,’ said the gaberlunzie; ‘but an my auld acquaintance be hersell, or ony thing like hersell, she may come to wind us a pirn. It’s fearsome baith to see and hear her when she wampishes about her arms, and gets to her English, and speaks as if she were a prent book, let a-be an auld fisher’s wife. But, indeed, she had a grand education, and was muckle taen out afore she married an unco bit beneath hersell. She’s aulder than me by half a score years; but I mind weel eneugh they made as muckle wark about her making a half-merk marriage wi’ Simon Mucklebackit, this Saunders’s father, as if she had been ane o’ the gentry. But she got into favour again, and then she lost it again, as I hae heard her son say, when he was a muckle chield; and then they got muckle siller, and left the Countess’s land and settled here. But things never throve wi’ them. Howsomever, she’s a weel-educate woman, and an she win to her English, as I hae heard her do at an orra time, she may come to fickle us a’.’

CHAPTER XL

Life ebbs from such old age, unmark'd and silent,
As the slow neap-tide leaves yon stranded galley.
Late she rock'd merrily at the least impulse
That wind or wave could give; but now her keel
Is settling on the sand, her mast has ta'en
An angle with the sky, from which it shifts not.
Each wave receding shakes her less and less,
Till, bedded on the strand she shall remain
Useless as motionless.

Old Play.

As the Antiquary lifted the latch of the hut, he was surprised to hear the shrill, tremulous voice of Elspeth chanting forth an old ballad in a wild and doleful recitative.

'The herring loves the merry moonlight,
The mackerel loves the wind,
But the oyster loves the dredging sang,
For they come of a gentle kind.'

A diligent collector of these legendary scraps of ancient poetry, his foot refused to cross the threshold when his ear was thus arrested, and his hand instinctively took pencil and memorandum-book. From time to time the old woman spoke as if to the children: 'O ay, hinnie, whisht, whisht! and I'll begin a bonnier ane than that:—

Now haud your tongue, baith wife and carle,
And listen, great and sma',
And I will sing of Glenallan's Earl
That fought on the red Harlaw.

The cronach's cried on Bennachie,
And down the Don an a'
And hieland and lawland may mournfu' be
For the sair field of Harlaw.

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I dinna mind the neist verse weel; my memory's failed,
and there's unco thoughts come ower me. God keep us
frae temptation!

Here her voice sunk in indistinct muttering.

'It's a historical ballad,' said Oldbuck, eagerly, 'a genuine and undoubted fragment of minstrelsy! Percy would admire its simplicity; Ritson could not impugn its authenticity.'

'Ay, but it's a sad thing,' said Ochiltree, 'to see human nature sae far owertaen as to be skirling at auld sangs on the back of a loss like hers.'

'Hush, hush!' said the Antiquary; 'she has gotten the thread of the story again'; and as he spoke she sung:—

'They saddled a hundred milk-white steeds,
They hae bridled a hundred black,
With a chafron of steel on each horse's head,
And a good knight upon his back.'

'Chafron!' exclaimed the Antiquary, 'equivalent, perhaps, to *cheveron*; the word's worth a dollar'; and down it went in his red book.

'They hadna ridden a mile, a mile,
A mile, but barely ten,
When Donald came branking down the brae
Wi' twenty thousand men.

Their tartans they were waving wide,
Their glaives were glancing clear,
The pibrochs rung frae side to side,
Would deafen ye to hear.

The great Earl in his stirrups stood
That Highland host to see:
"Now here a knight that's stout and good
May prove a jeopardie.

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“What wouldst thou do, my squire so gay,
That rides beside my reyne
Were ye Glenallan’s Earl the day,
And I were Roland Cheyne?

“To turn the rein were sin and shame,
To fight were wondrous peril,
What would ye do now, Roland Cheyne,
Were ye Glenallan’s Earl?”

Ye maun ken, hinnies, that this Roland Cheyne, for as poor and auld as I sit in the chimney-neuk, was my forebear, and an awfu’ man he was that day in the fight, but specially after the Earl had fa’en; for he blamed himsell for the counsel he gave, to fight before Mar came up wi’ Mearns and Aberdeen and Angus.’

Her voice rose and became more animated as she recited the warlike counsel of her ancestor:—

“Were I Glenallan’s Earl this tide,
And ye were Roland Cheyne,
The spur should be in my horse’s side,
And the bridle upon his mane.

“If they hae twenty thousand blades,
And we twice ten times ten,
Yet they hae but their tartan plaids,
And we are mail-clad men.

“My horse shall ride through ranks sae rude
As through the moorland fern,
Then ne’er let the gentle Norman blude
Grow cauld for Highland kerne.”’

‘Do you hear that, nephew?’ said Oldbuck; ‘you observe your Gaelic ancestors were not held in high repute formerly by the Lowland warriors.’

‘I hear,’ said Hector, ‘a silly old woman sing a silly

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old song. I am surprised, sir, that you, who will not listen to Ossian's "Songs of Selma," can be pleased with such trash. I vow, I have not seen or heard a worse half-penny ballad; I don't believe you could match it in any pedlar's pack in the country. I should be ashamed to think that the honour of the Highlands could be affected by such doggrel.' And, tossing up his head, he snuffed the air indignantly.

Apparently the old woman heard the sound of their voices; for, ceasing her song, she called out, 'Come in, sirs, come in; good-will never halted at the door-stane.'

They entered, and found to their surprise Elspeth alone, sitting 'ghastly on the hearth,' like the personification of Old Age in the 'Hunter's Song of the Owl,'¹ 'wrinkled, tattered, vile, dim-eyed, discoloured, torpid.'

'They're a' out,' she said, as they entered; 'but, an ye will sit a blink, somebody will be in. If ye hae business wi' my gude-daughter or my son, they'll be in belyve: I never speak on business mysell. Bairns, gie them seats. The bairns are a' gane out, I trow (looking around her). I was crooning to keep them quiet a wee while since; but they hae cruppin out some gate. Sit down, sirs, they'll be in belyve'; and she dismissed her spindle from her hand to twirl upon the floor, and soon seemed exclusively occupied in regulating its motion, as unconscious of the presence of the strangers as she appeared indifferent to their rank or business there.

'I wish,' said Oldbuck, 'she would resume that canticle or legendary fragment: I always suspected there was

¹ See Mrs. Grant on the *Highland Superstitions*, vol. II., p. 260, for this fine translation from the Gaelic.

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a skirmish of cavalry before the main battle of the Harlaw.¹

‘If your honour pleases,’ said Edie, ‘had ye not better proceed to the business that brought us a’ here? I’se engage to get ye the sang ony time.’

‘I believe you are right, Edie. *Do manus* — I submit. But how shall we manage? She sits there, the very image of dotage. Speak to her, Edie; try if you can make her recollect having sent you to Glenallan House.’

Edie rose accordingly, and, crossing the floor, placed himself in the same position which he had occupied during his former conversation with her. ‘I’m fain to see ye looking sae weel, cummer; the mair, that the black ox has tramped on ye since I was aneath your roof-tree.’

‘Ay,’ said Elspeth, but rather from a general idea of misfortune than any exact recollection of what had happened, ‘there has been distress amang us of late. I wonder how younger folk bide it; I bide it ill. I canna hear the wind whistle and the sea roar, but I think I see the coble whombled keel up, and some o’ them struggling in the waves! Eh, sirs, sic weary dreams as folk hae between sleeping and waking, before they win to the lang sleep and the sound! I could amaist think whiles my son, or else Steenie, my oe, was dead, and that I had seen the burial. Isna that a queer dream for a daft auld carline? What for should ony o’ them dee before me? It’s out o’ the course o’ nature, ye ken.’

‘I think you’ll make very little of this stupid old woman,’ said Hector, who still nourished, perhaps, some feelings of the dislike excited by the disparaging mention of his countrymen in her lay. ‘I think you’ll make but

¹ See Note 2.

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little of her, sir; and it's wasting our time to sit here and listen to her dotage.'

'Hector,' said the Antiquary, indignantly, 'if you do not respect her misfortunes, respect at least her old age and grey hairs. This is the last stage of existence, so finely treated by the Latin poet: —

Omni

Membrorum damno major dementia, quæ nec
Nomina servorum, nec vultus agnoscit amici,
Cum queis preterita cœnavit nocte, nec illos
Quos genuit, quos eduxit.'

'That's Latin!' said Elspeth, rousing herself as if she attended to the lines which the Antiquary recited with great pomp of diction, 'that's Latin!' and she cast a wild glance around her. 'Has there a priest fund me out at last?'

'You see, nephew, her comprehension is almost equal to your own of that fine passage.'

'I hope you think, sir, that I knew it to be Latin as well as she did?'

'Why, as to that — But stay, she is about to speak.'

'I will have no priest, none,' said the beldam, with impotent vehemence; 'as I have lived I will die: none shall say that I betrayed my mistress, though it were to save my soul!'

'That bespoke a foul conscience,' said the mendicant; 'I wuss she wad mak a clean breast, an it were but for her ain sake,' and he again assailed her.

'Weel, gudewife, I did your errand to the Yerl.'

'To what Earl? I ken nae Earl. I kend a Countess ance, I wish to Heaven I had never kend her! for by that acquaintance, neighbour, there cam (and she counted

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her withered fingers as she spoke) first Pride, then Malice, then Revenge, then False Witness; and Murder tirl'd at the doorpin, if he camna ben. And werena thae pleasant guests, think ye, to take up their quarters in ae woman's heart? I trow there was routh o' company.'

'But, cummer,' continued the beggar, 'it wasna the Countess of Glenallan I meant, but her son, him that was Lord Geraldin.'

'I mind it now,' she said; 'I saw him no that lang syne, and we had a heavy speech thegither. Eh, sirs, the comely young lord is turned as auld and frail as I am: it's muckle that sorrow and heartbreak and crossing of true love will do wi' young blood. But suldna his mither hae lookit to that hersell? We were but to do her bidding, ye ken. I am sure there's naebody can blame me: he wasna my son, and she was my mistress. Ye ken how the rhyme says—I hae maist forgotten how to sing, or else the tune's left my auld head:—

He turn'd him right and round again,
Said, Scorn na at my mither;
Light loves I may get mony a ane,
But minnie ne'er anither.

Then he was but of the half blude, ye ken, and hers was the right Glenallan after a'. Na, na, I maun never maen doing and suffering for the Countess Joscelin. Never will I maen for that.'

Then drawing her flax from the distaff, with the dogged air of one who is resolved to confess nothing, she resumed her interrupted occupation.

'I hae heard,' said the mendicant, taking his cue from what Oldbuck had told him of the family history, 'I

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hae heard, cummer, that some ill tongue suld hae come between the Earl, that's Lord Geraldin, and his young bride.'

'Ill tongue!' she said, in hasty alarm; 'and what had she to fear frae an ill tongue? She was gude and fair enough, at least a' body said sae. But had she keepit her ain tongue aff ither folk she might hae been living like a leddy for a' that's come and gane yet.'

'But I hae heard say, gudewife,' continued Ochiltree, 'there was a clatter in the country, that her husband and her were ower sib when they married.'

'Wha durst speak o' that?' said the old woman, hastily; 'wha durst say they were married? Wha kend o' that? Not the Countess, not I; if they wedded in secret they were severed in secret. They drank of the fountains of their ain deceit.'

'No, wretched beldam,' exclaimed Oldbuck, who could keep silence no longer, 'they drank the poison that you and your wicked mistress prepared for them.'

'Ha, ha!' she replied, 'I aye thought it would come to this: it's but sitting silent when they examine me. There's nae torture in our days; and if there is, let them rend me! It's ill o' the vassal's mouth that betrays the bread it eats.'

'Speak to her, Edie,' said the Antiquary; 'she knows your voice, and answers to it most readily.'

'We shall mak naething mair out o' her,' said Ochiltree. 'When she has clinkit hersell down that way, and faulded her arms, she winna speak a word, they say, for weeks thegither. And besides, to my thinking, her face is sair changed since we cam in. However, I'se try her

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ance mair to satisfy your honour. — So you canna keep in mind, cummer, that your auld mistress, the Countess Joscelin, has been removed?’

‘Removed!’ she exclaimed, for that name never failed to produce its usual effect upon her; ‘then we maun a’ follow. A’ maun ride when she is in the saddle. Tell them to let Lord Geraldin ken we’re on before them; bring my hood and scarf — ye wadna hae me gang in the carriage wi’ my leddy and my hair in this fashion?’

She raised her shrivelled arms, and seemed busied like a woman who puts on her cloak to go abroad, then dropped them slowly and stiffly; and the same idea of a journey still floating apparently through her head, she proceeded in a hurried and interrupted manner, ‘Call Miss Neville. What do you mean by Lady Geraldin? I said Eveline Neville, not Lady Geraldin; there’s no Lady Geraldin; tell her that, and bid her change her wet gown, and no’ look sae pale. Bairn! what should she do wi’ a bairn? maidens hae nane, I trow. Teresa, Teresa, my lady calls us! Bring a candle, the grand staircase is as mirk as a Yule midnight! We are coming, my lady!’ With these words she sunk back on the settle, and from thence sidelong to the floor.¹

Edie ran to support her, but hardly got her in his arms before he said, ‘It’s a’ ower, she has passed away even with that last word.’

‘Impossible,’ said Oldbuck, hastily advancing, as did his nephew. But nothing was more certain. She had expired with the last hurried word that left her lips; and all that remained before them were the mortal relics of the

¹ See Note 3.

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creature who had so long struggled with an internal sense of concealed guilt, joined to all the distresses of age and poverty.

‘God grant that she be gane to a better place!’ said Edie, as he looked on the lifeless body; ‘but, oh! there was something lying hard and heavy at her heart. I have seen mony a ane dee, baith in the field o’ battle and a fair-strae death at hame; but I wad rather see them a’ ower again as sic a fearfu’ flitting as hers!’

‘We must call in the neighbours,’ said Oldbuck, when he had somewhat recovered his horror and astonishment, ‘and give warning of this additional calamity. I wish she could have been brought to a confession. And, though of far less consequence, I could have wished to transcribe that metrical fragment. But Heaven’s will must be done!’

They left the hut accordingly and gave the alarm in the hamlet, whose matrons instantly assembled to compose the limbs and arrange the body of her who might be considered as the mother of their settlement. Oldbuck promised his assistance for the funeral.

‘Your honour,’ said Ailison Breck, who was next in age to the deceased, ‘suld send doun something to us for keeping up our hearts at the lyke-wake, for a’ Saunders’s gin, puir man, was drucken out at the burial o’ Steenie, and we’ll no get mony to sit dry-lipped aside the corpse. Elspeth was unco clever in her young days, as I can mind right weel, but there was aye a word o’ her no being that chancy. Ane suldna speak ill o’ the dead — mair by token, o’ ane’s cummer and neighbour — but there was queer things said about a ledly and a bairn or she left the Craighburnfoot. And sae, in gude troth, it will be a

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puir lyke-wake unless your honour sends us something to keep us cracking.'

'You shall have some whiskey,' answered Oldbuck, 'the rather that you have preserved the proper word for that ancient custom of watching the dead. You observe, Hector, this is genuine Teutonic, from the Gothic *Leichnam*, a corpse. It is quite erroneously called *Late-wake*, though Brand favours that modern corruption and derivation.'

'I believe,' said Hector to himself, 'my uncle would give away Monkbarns to any one who would come to ask it in genuine Teutonic! Not a drop of whiskey would the old creatures have got had their president asked it for the use of the *Late-wake*.'

While Oldbuck was giving some farther directions and promising assistance, a servant of Sir Arthur's came riding very hard along the sands, and stopped his horse when he saw the Antiquary. 'There had something,' he said, 'very particular happened at the Castle (he could not, or would not, explain what), and Miss Wardour had sent him off express to Monkbarns, to beg that Mr. Oldbuck would come to them without a moment's delay.'

'I am afraid,' said the Antiquary, 'his course also is drawing to a close. What can I do?'

'Do, sir!' exclaimed Hector, with his characteristic impatience. 'Get on the horse and turn his head homeward; you will be at Knockwinnock Castle in ten minutes.'

'He is quite a free goer,' said the servant, dismounting to adjust the girths and stirrups; 'he only pulls a little if he feels a dead weight on him.'

'I should soon be a dead weight *off* him, my friend,'

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said the Antiquary. 'What the devil, nephew, are you weary of me? or do you suppose me weary of my life, that I should get on the back of such a Bucephalus as that? No, no, my friend, if I am to be at Knockwinnock to-day, it must be by walking quietly forward on my own feet, which I will do with as little delay as possible. Captain M'Intyre may ride that animal himself, if he pleases.'

'I have little hope I could be of any use, uncle, but I cannot think of their distress without wishing to show sympathy at least, so I will ride on before and announce to them that you are coming. I'll trouble you for your spurs, my friend.'

'You will scarce need them, sir,' said the man, taking them off at the same time and buckling them upon Captain M'Intyre's heels, 'he's very frank to the road.'

Oldbuck stood astonished at this last act of temerity.

'Are you mad, Hector?' he cried, 'or have you forgotten what is said by Quintus Curtius, with whom, as a soldier, you must needs be familiar, *Nobilis equus umbra quidem virgæ regitur; ignavus ne calcari quidem excitari potest*; which plainly shows that spurs are useless in every case, and, I may add, dangerous in most?'

But Hector, who cared little for the opinion of either Quintus Curtius or of the Antiquary upon such a topic, only answered with a heedless 'Never fear, never fear, sir.'

With that he gave his able horse the head,
And, bending forward, struck his armed heels
Against the panting sides of his poor jade,
Up to the rowel-head; and starting so,
He seem'd in running to devour the way,
Staying no longer question.

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‘There they go, well matched,’ said Oldbuck, looking after them as they started — ‘a mad horse and a wild boy, the two most unruly creatures in Christendom! and all to get half an hour sooner to a place where nobody wants him; for I doubt Sir Arthur’s griefs are beyond the cure of our light horseman. It must be the villainy of Dousterswivel, for whom Sir Arthur has done so much; for I cannot help observing that with some natures Tacitus’s maxim holdeth good: *Beneficia eo usque læta sunt dum videntur exsolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur*, from which a wise man might take a caution not to oblige any man beyond the degree in which he may expect to be requited, lest he should make his debtor a bankrupt in gratitude.’

Murmuring to himself such scraps of cynical philosophy, our Antiquary paced the sands towards Knockwinnock; but it is necessary we should outstrip him for the purpose of explaining the reasons of his being so anxiously summoned thither.

CHAPTER XLI

So, while the goose, of whom the fable told,
Incumbent, brooded o'er her eggs of gold,
With hand outstretch'd, impatient to destroy,
Stole on her secret nest the cruel boy,
Whose gripe rapacious changed her splendid dream
For wings vain fluttering and for dying scream.

The Loves of the Sea-weeds.

FROM the time that Sir Arthur Wardour had become possessor of the treasure found in Misticot's grave, he had been in a state of mind more resembling ecstasy than sober sense. Indeed, at one time his daughter had become seriously apprehensive for his intellect; for, as he had no doubt that he had the secret of possessing himself of wealth to an unbounded extent, his language and carriage were those of a man who had acquired the philosopher's stone. He talked of buying contiguous estates that would have led him from one side of the island to the other, as if he were determined to brook no neighbour save the sea. He corresponded with an architect of eminence upon a plan of renovating the castle of his forefathers on a style of extended magnificence that might have rivalled that of Windsor, and laying out the grounds on a suitable scale. Troops of liveried menials were already in fancy marshalled in his halls, and — for what may not unbounded wealth authorise its possessor to aspire to? — the coronet of a marquis, perhaps of a duke, was glittering before his imagination. His daughter — to what matches might she not look forward? Even an alliance with the blood-

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royal was not beyond the sphere of his hopes. His son was already a general, and he himself whatever ambition could dream of in its wildest visions.

In this mood, if any one endeavoured to bring Sir Arthur down to the regions of common life, his replies were in the vein of Ancient Pistol:

A fico for the world and worldlings base!
I speak of Africa and golden joys!

The reader may conceive the amazement of Miss Wardour when, instead of undergoing an investigation concerning the addresses of Lovel, as she had expected from the long conference of her father with Mr. Oldbuck upon the morning of the fated day when the treasure was discovered, the conversation of Sir Arthur announced an imagination heated with the hopes of possessing the most unbounded wealth. But she was seriously alarmed when Dousterswivel was sent for to the Castle, and was closeted with her father, his mishap condoled with, his part taken, and his loss compensated. All the suspicions which she had long entertained respecting this man became strengthened by observing his pains to keep up the golden dreams of her father, and to secure for himself, under various pretexts, as much as possible out of the windfall which had so strangely fallen to Sir Arthur's share.

Other evil symptoms began to appear, following close on each other. Letters arrived every post, which Sir Arthur, as soon as he had looked at the directions, flung into the fire without taking the trouble to open them. Miss Wardour could not help suspecting that these epistles, the contents of which seemed to be known to

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her father by a sort of intuition, came from pressing creditors. In the meanwhile the temporary aid which he had received from the treasure dwindled fast away. By far the greater part had been swallowed up by the necessity of paying the bill of six hundred pounds which had threatened Sir Arthur with instant distress. Of the rest, some part was given to the adept, some wasted upon extravagances which seemed to the poor knight fully authorised by his full-blown hopes, and some went to stop for a time the mouths of such claimants who, being weary of fair promises, had become of opinion with Harpagon that it was necessary to touch something substantial. At length circumstances announced but too plainly that it was all expended within two or three days after its discovery; and there appeared no prospect of a supply. Sir Arthur, naturally impatient, now taxed Dousterswivel anew with breach of those promises through which he had hoped to convert all his lead into gold. But that worthy gentleman's turn was now served; and, as he had grace enough to wish to avoid witnessing the fall of the house which he had undermined, he was at the trouble of bestowing a few learned terms of art upon Sir Arthur, that at least he might not be tormented before his time. He took leave of him with assurances that he would return to Knockwinnock the next morning with such information as would not fail to relieve Sir Arthur from all his distresses.

‘For, since I have consulted in such matters, I have never,’ said Mr. Herman Dousterswivel, ‘approached so near de *arcanum*, what you call de great mystery — de Panchresta, de Polychresta; I do know as much of it as Pelaso de Taranta or Basilius, and either I will bring

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you in two and tree days de No. III. of Mr. Mishdigoat, or you shall call me one knave myself, and never look me in de face again no more at all.'

The adept departed with this assurance, in the firm resolution of making good the latter part of the proposition, and never again appearing before his injured patron. Sir Arthur remained in a doubtful and anxious state of mind. The positive assurances of the philosopher, with the hard words Panchresta, Basilius, and so forth, produced some effect on his mind. But he had been too often deluded by such jargon to be absolutely relieved of his doubt, and he retired for the evening into his library in the fearful state of one who, hanging over a precipice, and without the means of retreat, perceives the stone on which he rests gradually parting from the rest of the crag and about to give way with him.

The visions of hope decayed, and there increased in proportion that feverish agony of anticipation with which a man, educated in a sense of consequence, and possessed of opulence, the supporter of an ancient name, and the father of two promising children, foresaw the hour approaching which should deprive him of all the splendor which time had made familiarly necessary to him, and send him forth into the world to struggle with poverty, with rapacity, and with scorn. Under these dire forebodings his temper, exhausted by the sickness of delayed hope, became peevish and fretful, and his words and actions sometimes expressed a reckless desperation which alarmed Miss Wardour extremely. We have seen on a former occasion that Sir Arthur was a man of passions lively and quick, in pro-

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portion to the weakness of his character in other respects; he was unused to contradiction, and if he had been hitherto, in general, good-humoured and cheerful, it was probably because the course of his life had afforded no such frequent provocation as to render his irritability habitual.

On the third morning after Dousterswivel's departure, the servant, as usual, laid on the breakfast table the newspaper and letters of the day. Miss Wardour took up the former to avoid the continued ill-humour of her father, who had wrought himself into a violent passion because the toast was overbrowned.

'I perceive how it is,' was his concluding speech on this interesting subject: 'my servants, who have had their share of my fortune, begin to think there is little to be made of me in future. But while I *am* the scoundrels' master I will be so, and permit no neglect — no, nor endure a hair's-breadth diminution of the respect I am entitled to exact from them.'

'I am ready to leave your honour's service this instant,' said the domestic upon whom the fault had been charged, 'as soon as you order payment of my wages.'

Sir Arthur, as if stung by a serpent, thrust his hand into his pocket and instantly drew out the money which it contained, but which was short of the man's claim. 'What money have you got, Miss Wardour?' he said, in a tone of affected calmness, but which concealed violent agitation.

Miss Wardour gave him her purse; he attempted to count the bank notes which it contained, but could not reckon them. After twice miscounting the sum, he

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threw the whole to his daughter, and saying in a stern voice, 'Pay the rascal, and let him leave the house instantly!' he strode out of the room.

The mistress and servant stood alike astonished at the agitation and vehemence of his manner.

'I am sure, ma'am, if I had thought I was particularly wrang I wadna hae made ony answer when Sir Arthur challenged me. I hae been lang in his service, and he has been a kind master, and you a kind mistress, and I wad like ill ye should think I wad start for a hasty word. I am sure it was very wrang o' me to speak about wages to his honour, when maybe he has something to vex him. I had nae thoughts o' leaving the family in this way.'

'Go downstairs, Robert,' said his mistress; 'something has happened to fret my father; go downstairs, and let Alick answer the bell.'

When the man left the room, Sir Arthur reëntered, as if he had been watching his departure. 'What's the meaning of this?' he said, hastily, as he observed the notes lying still on the table. 'Is he not gone? Am I neither to be obeyed as a master or a father?'

'He is gone to give up his charge to the house-keeper, sir; I thought there was not such instant haste.'

'There *is* haste, Miss Wardour,' answered her father, interrupting her. 'What I do henceforth in the house of my forefathers must be done speedily or never.'

He then sate down and took up with a trembling hand the basin of tea prepared for him, protracting the swallowing of it, as if to delay the necessity of opening the post-letters which lay on the table, and which he

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eyed from time to time, as if they had been a nest of adders ready to start into life and spring upon him.

‘You will be happy to hear,’ said Miss Wardour, willing to withdraw her father’s mind from the gloomy reflections in which he appeared to be plunged, ‘you will be happy to hear, sir, that Lieutenant Taffril’s gun-brig has got safe into Leith Roads. I observe there had been apprehensions for his safety; I am glad we did not hear them till they were contradicted.’

‘And what is Taffril and his gun-brig to me?’

‘Sir!’ said Miss Wardour in astonishment; for Sir Arthur, in his ordinary state of mind, took a fidgety sort of interest in all the gossip of the day and country.

‘I say,’ he repeated, in a higher and still more impatient key, ‘what do I care who is saved or lost? It’s nothing to me, I suppose?’

‘I did not know you were busy, Sir Arthur; and thought, as Mr. Taffril is a brave man, and from our own country, you would be happy to hear —’

‘Oh, I am happy, as happy as possible; and, to make you happy too, you shall have some of my good news in return.’ And he caught up a letter. ‘It does not signify which I open first, they are all to the same tune.’

He broke the seal hastily, run the letter over, and then threw it to his daughter. ‘Ay; I could not have lighted more happily! this places the copestone.’

Miss Wardour, in silent terror, took up the letter. ‘Read it — read it aloud!’ said her father. ‘It cannot be read too often; it will serve to break you in for other good news of the same kind.’

She began to read with a faltering voice, ‘Dear Sir.’

‘He “dears” me too, you see — this impudent drudge

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of a writer's office, who a twelvemonth since was not fit company for my second table. I suppose I shall be "dear Knight" with him by and by.'

"Dear Sir," resumed Miss Wardour; but, interrupting herself, 'I see the contents are unpleasant, sir; it will only vex you, my reading them aloud.'

'If you will allow me to know my own pleasure, Miss Wardour, I entreat you to go on; I presume, if it were unnecessary, I should not ask you to take the trouble.'

"Having been of late taken into copartnery," continued Miss Wardour, reading the letter, "'by Mr. Gilbert Greenhorn, son of your late correspondent and man of business, Girnigo Greenhorn, Esq., writer to the signet, whose business I conducted as parliament-house clerk for many years, which business will in future be carried on under the firm of Greenhorn and Grinderson — which I memorandum for the sake of accuracy in addressing your future letters — and having had of late favours of yours, directed to my aforesaid partner, Gilbert Greenhorn, in consequence of his absence at the Lamberton races, have the honour to reply to your said favours.'"

'You see my friend is methodical, and commences by explaining the causes which have procured me so modest and elegant a correspondent. Go on, I can bear it.'

And he laughed that bitter laugh which is perhaps the most fearful expression of mental misery. Trembling to proceed, and yet afraid to disobey, Miss Wardour continued to read: "'I am, for myself and partner, sorry we cannot oblige you by looking out for the sums you mention, or applying for a suspension in the case of

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Goldiebirds' bond, which would be more inconsistent as we have been employed to act as the said Goldiebirds' procurators and attorneys, in which capacity we have taken out a charge of horning against you, as you must be aware by the schedule left by the messenger, for the sum of four thousand seven hundred and fifty-six pounds five shillings and sixpence one-fourth of a penny sterling, which, with annual rent and expenses effeiring, we presume will be settled during the currency of the charge, to prevent further trouble. Same time, I am under the necessity to observe our own account, amounting to seven hundred and sixty-nine pounds ten shillings and sixpence, is also due, and settlement will be agreeable; but, as we hold your rights, title-deeds, and documents in hypothec, shall have no objection to give reasonable time — say till the next money term. I am, for myself and partner, concerned to add that Messrs. Goldiebirds' instructions to us are, to proceed *peremptorie* and *sine mora*, of which I have the pleasure to advise you to prevent future mistakes, reserving to ourselves otherwise to *ag * as accords. I am, for self and partner, dear sir, your obliged humble servant, Gabriel Grinderson, for Greenhorn and Grinderson.”

‘Ungrateful villain!’ said Miss Wardour.

‘Why, no; it’s in the usual rule, I suppose. The blow could not have been perfect if dealt by another hand; it’s all just as it should be,’ answered the poor Baronet, his affected composure sorely belied by his quivering lip and rolling eye. ‘But here’s a postscript I did not notice; come, finish the epistle.’

“I have to add — not for self, but partner — that Mr. Greenhorn will accommodate you by taking your

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service of plate, or the bay horses, if sound in wind and limb, at a fair appreciation, in part payment of your account.”

‘G—d confound him!’ said Sir Arthur, losing all command of himself at this condescending proposal; ‘his grandfather shod my father’s horses, and this descendant of a scoundrelly blacksmith proposes to swindle me out of mine! But I will write him a proper answer.’

And he sate down and began to write with great vehemence, then stopped and read aloud: “Mr. Gilbert Greenhorn, In answer to two letters of a late date, I received a letter from a person calling himself Grinderson, and designing himself as your partner. When I address any one I do not usually expect to be answered by deputy. I think I have been useful to your father, and friendly and civil to yourself, and therefore am now surprised —” And yet,’ said he, stopping short, ‘why should I be surprised at that or anything else, or why should I take up my time in writing to such a scoundrel? I shan’t be always kept in prison, I suppose, and to break that puppy’s bones when I get out shall be my first employment.’

‘In prison, sir?’ said Miss Wardour, faintly.

‘Ay, in prison, to be sure. Do you make any question about that? Why, Mr. What’s-his-name’s fine letter for self and partner seems to be thrown away on you, or else you have got four thousand so many hundred pounds, with the due proportion of shillings, pence, and half-pence, to pay that aforesaid demand, as he calls it.’

‘I, sir? O if I had the means! But where’s my

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brother? Why does he not come, and so long in Scotland? He might do something to assist us.'

'Who, Reginald? I suppose he's gone with Mr. Gilbert Greenhorn, or some such respectable person, to the Lamberton races. I have expected him this week past; but I cannot wonder that my children should neglect me as well as every other person. But I should beg your pardon, my love, who never either neglected or offended me in your life.'

And, kissing her cheek as she threw her arms round his neck, he experienced that consolation which a parent feels, even in the most distressed state, in the assurance that he possesses the affection of a child.

Miss Wardour took the advantage of this revulsion of feeling to endeavour to soothe her father's mind to composure. She reminded him that he had many friends.

'I *had* many once,' said Sir Arthur; 'but of some I have exhausted their kindness with my frantic projects, others are unable to assist me, others are unwilling; it is all over with me. I only hope Reginald will take example by my folly.'

'Should I not send to Monkbarns, sir?' said his daughter.

'To what purpose? He cannot lend me such a sum, and would not if he could, for he knows I am otherwise drowned in debt; and he would only give me scraps of misanthropy and quaint ends of Latin.'

'But he is shrewd and sensible, and was bred to business, and, I am sure, always loved this family.'

'Yes, I believe he did: it is a fine pass we are come to when the affection of an Oldbuck is of consequence to a Wardour! But when matters come to extremity, as I

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suppose they presently will, it may be as well to send for him. And now go take your walk, my dear; my mind is more composed than when I had this cursed disclosure to make. You know the worst, and may daily or hourly expect it. Go take your walk; I would willingly be alone for a little while.'

When Miss Wardour left the apartment her first occupation was to avail herself of the half permission granted by her father, by despatching to Monkbarns the messenger, who, as we have already seen, met the Antiquary and his nephew on the seabeach.

Little recking, and indeed scarce knowing, where she was wandering, chance directed her into the walk beneath the Briery Bank, as it was called. A brook, which in former days had supplied the castle moat with water, here descended through a narrow dell, up which Miss Wardour's taste had directed a natural path, which was rendered neat and easy of ascent, without the air of being formally made and preserved. It suited well the character of the little glen, which was overhung with thickets and underwood, chiefly of larch and hazel, intermixed with the usual varieties of the thorn and brier. In this walk had passed that scene of explanation between Miss Wardour and Lovel which was overheard by old Edie Ochiltree. With a heart softened by the distress which approached her family, Miss Wardour now recalled every word and argument which Lovel had urged in support of his suit, and could not help confessing to herself it was no small subject of pride to have inspired a young man of his talents with a passion so strong and disinterested. That he should have left the pursuit of a profession in which he was said to be rapidly rising to

bury himself in a disagreeable place like Fairport, and brood over an unrequited passion, might be ridiculed by others as romantic, but was naturally forgiven as an excess of affection by the person who was the object of his attachment. Had he possessed an independence, however moderate, or ascertained a clear and undisputed claim to the rank in society he was well qualified to adorn, she might now have had it in her power to offer her father, during his misfortunes, an asylum in an establishment of her own. These thoughts, so favourable to the absent lover, crowded in, one after the other, with such a minute recapitulation of his words, looks, and actions as plainly intimated that his former repulse had been dictated rather by duty than inclination. Isabella was musing alternately upon this subject and upon that of her father's misfortunes when, as the path winded round a little hillock covered with brushwood, the old Blue-Gown suddenly met her.

With an air as if he had something important and mysterious to communicate he doffed his bonnet, and assumed the cautious step and voice of one who would not willingly be overheard. 'I hae been wishing muckle to meet wi' your leddyship; for ye ken I darena come to the house for Dousterswivel.'

'I heard indeed,' said Miss Wardour, dropping an alms into the bonnet, 'I heard that you had done a very foolish, if not a very bad thing, Edie, and I was sorry to hear it.'

'Hout, my bonny leddy — fulish? A' the world's fules, and how should auld Edie Ochiltree be aye wise? and for the evil, let them wha deal wi' Dousterswivel tell whether he gat a grain mair than his deserts.'

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‘That may be true, Edie, and yet,’ said Miss Wardour, ‘you may have been very wrong.’

‘Weel, weel, we’se no dispute that e’enow; it’s about yoursell I’m gaun to speak. Div ye ken what’s hanging ower the house of Knockwinnock?’

‘Great distress, I fear, Edie,’ answered Miss Wardour; ‘but I am surprised it is already so public.’

‘Public! Sweepclean, the messenger, will be there the day wi’ a’ his tackle. I ken it frae ane o’ his concurrents, as they ca’ them, that’s warned to meet him; and they’ll be about their wark belyve. Whare they clip there needs nae kame: they sheer close eneugh.’

‘Are you sure this bad hour, Edie, is so very near? come I know it will.’

‘It’s e’en as I tell you, leddy! but dinna be cast down; there’s a heaven ower your head here, as weel as in that fearful night atween the Ballyburgh Ness and the Halket Head. D’ye think He wha rebuked the waters canna protect you against the wrath of men, though they be armed with human authority?’

‘It is, indeed, all we have to trust to.’

‘Ye dinna ken — ye dinna ken; when the night’s darkest the dawn’s nearest. If I had a gude horse, or could ride him when I had him, I reckon there wad be help yet. I trusted to hae gotten a cast wi’ the Royal Charlotte, but she’s coupit yonder, it’s like, at Kittlebrig. There was a young gentleman on the box, and he behaved to drive; and Tam Sang, that suld hae mair sense, he behaved to let him, and the daft callant couldna tak the turn at the corner o’ the brig, and od! he took the curbstane, and he’s whomled her as I wad whomle a toom bicker — it was a luck I hadna gotten

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on the tap o' her. Sae I came down atween hope and despair to see if ye wad send me on.'

'And, Edie, where would ye go?' said the young lady.

'To Tannonburgh, my leddy' (which was the first stage from Fairport, but a good deal nearer to Knockwinnock), 'and that without delay; it's a' on your ain business.'

'Our business, Edie? Alas! I give you all credit for your good meaning, but —'

'There's nae "buts" about it, my leddy, for gang I maun,' said the persevering Blue-Gown.

'But what is it that you would do at Tannonburgh? or how can your going there benefit my father's affairs?'

'Indeed, my sweet leddy,' said the gaberlunzie, 'ye maun just trust that bit secret to auld Edie's grey pow, and ask nae questions about it. Certainly if I wad hae wared my life for you yon night, I can hae nae reason to play an ill pliskie t'ye in the day o' your distress.'

'Well, Edie, follow me then,' said Miss Wardour, 'and I will try to get you sent to Tannonburgh.'

'Mak haste then, my bonny leddy, mak haste, for the love o' goodness!' and he continued to exhort her to expedition until they reached the Castle.

CHAPTER XLII

Let those go see who will; I like it not,
For, say he was a slave to rank and pomp,
And all the nothings he is now divorced from
By the hard doom of stern necessity;
Yet is it sad to mark his alter'd brow,
Where Vanity adjusts her flimsy veil
O'er the deep wrinkles of repentant anguish.

Old Play.

WHEN Miss Wardour arrived in the Court of the Castle, she was apprised by the first glance that the visit of the officers of the law had already taken place. There was confusion, and gloom, and sorrow, and curiosity among the domestics, while the retainers of the law went from place to place, making an inventory of the goods and chattels falling under their warrant of distress, or poinding, as it is called in the law of Scotland. Captain M'Intyre flew to her, as, struck dumb with the melancholy conviction of her father's ruin, she paused upon the threshold of the gateway.

'Dear Miss Wardour,' he said, 'do not make yourself uneasy; my uncle is coming immediately, and I am sure he will find some way to clear the house of these rascals.'

'Alas! Captain M'Intyre, I fear it will be too late.'

'No,' answered Edie, impatiently, 'could I but get to Tannonburgh. In the name of Heaven, Captain! contrive some way to get me on, and ye'll do this poor ruined family the best day's doing that has been done them since Red-hand's days; for as sure as e'er an auld

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saw came true, Knockwinnock house and land will be lost and won this day.'

'Why, what good can you do, old man?' said Hector.

But Robert, the domestic with whom Sir Arthur had been so much displeased in the morning, as if he had been watching for an opportunity to display his zeal, stepped hastily forward and said to his mistress, 'If you please, ma'am, this auld man, Ochiltree, is very skeely and auld-farrant about mony things, as the diseases of cows and horse, and sic like, and I am sure he disna want to be at Tannonburgh the day for naething, since he insists on't this gate; and, if your leddyship pleases, I'll drive him there in the taxed cart in an hour's time. I wad fain be of some use; I could bite my very tongue out when I think on this morning.'

'I am obliged to you, Robert,' said Miss Wardour; 'and if you really think it has the least chance of being useful —'

'In the name of God,' said the old man, 'yoke the cart, Robie, and if I am no o' some use, less or mair, I'll gie ye leave to fling me ower Kittlebrig, as ye come back again. But, O man, haste ye, for time's precious this day.'

Robert looked at his mistress as she retired into the house, and, seeing he was not prohibited, flew to the stable-yard, which was adjacent to the court, in order to yoke the carriage; for, though an old beggar was the personage least likely to render effectual assistance in a case of pecuniary distress, yet there was among the common people of Edie's circle a general idea of his prudence and sagacity which authorized Robert's conclusion, that he would not so earnestly have urged the

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necessity of this expedition had he not been convinced of its utility. But so soon as the servant took hold of a horse to harness him for the tax-cart, an officer touched him on the shoulder : 'My friend, you must let that beast alone, he 's down in the schedule.'

'What,' said Robert, 'am I not to take my master's horse to go my young leddy's errand?'

'You must remove nothing here,' said the man of office, 'or you will be liable for all consequences.'

'What the devil, sir,' said Hector, who, having followed to examine Ochiltree more closely on the nature of his hopes and expectations, already began to bristle like one of the terriers of his own native mountains, and sought but a decent pretext for venting his displeasure, 'have you the impudence to prevent the young lady's servant from obeying her orders?'

There was something in the air and tone of the young soldier which seemed to argue that his interference was not likely to be confined to mere expostulation, and which, if it promised finally the advantages of a process of battery and deforcement, would certainly commence with the unpleasant circumstances necessary for founding such a complaint. The legal officer, confronted with him of the military, grasped with one doubtful hand the greasy bludgeon which was to enforce his authority, and with the other produced his short official baton, tipped with silver, and having a movable ring upon it. 'Captain M'Intyre, sir, I have no quarrel with you, but if you interrupt me in my duty, I will break the wand of peace, and declare myself deforced.'

'And who the devil cares,' said Hector, totally ignorant of the words of judicial action, 'whether you declare

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yourself divorced or married? And as to breaking your wand, or breaking the peace, or whatever you call it, all I know is, that I will break your bones if you prevent the lad from harnessing the horses to obey his mistress's orders.'

'I take all who stand here to witness,' said the messenger, 'that I showed him my blazon and explained my character. "He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar,"' and he slid his enigmatical ring from one end of the baton to the other, being the appropriate symbol of his having been forcibly interrupted in the discharge of his duty.

Honest Hector, better accustomed to the artillery of the field than to that of the law, saw this mystical ceremony with great indifference, and with like unconcern beheld the messenger sit down to write out an execution of deforcement. But at this moment, to prevent the well-meaning hot-headed Highlander from running the risk of a severe penalty, the Antiquary arrived puffing and blowing, with his handkerchief crammed under his hat and his wig upon the end of his stick.

'What the deuce is the matter here?' he exclaimed, hastily adjusting his headgear; 'I have been following you in fear of finding your idle loggerhead knocked against one rock or other, and here I find you parted with your Bucephalus and quarrelling with Sweepclean. A messenger, Hector, is a worse foe than a *phoca*, whether it be the *phoca barbata* or the *phoca vitulina* of your late conflict.'

'D—n the *phoca*, sir,' said Hector, 'whether it be the one or the other! I say d—n them both particularly! I think you would not have me stand quietly by and

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see a scoundrel like this, because he calls himself a king's messenger, forsooth — I hope the king has many better for his meanest errands — insult a young lady of family and fashion like Miss Wardour?’

‘Rightly argued, Hector,’ said the Antiquary; ‘but the king, like other people, has now and then shabby errands, and, in your ear, must have shabby fellows to do them. But even supposing you unacquainted with the statutes of William the Lion in which, *capite quarto, versu quinto*, this crime of deforcement is termed *despectus domini regis*, a contempt, to wit, of the king himself, in whose name all legal diligence issues, could you not have inferred, from the information I took so much pains to give you to-day, that those who interrupt officers who come to execute letters of caption, are *tanquam participes criminis rebellionis*? seeing that he who aids a rebel is himself, *quodammodo*, an accessory to rebellion. But I’ll bring you out of the scrape.’

He then spoke to the messenger, who, upon his arrival, had laid aside all thoughts of making a good-bye job out of the deforcement, and accepted Mr. Oldbuck’s assurances that the horse and taxed cart should be safely returned in the course of two or three hours.

‘Very well, sir,’ said the Antiquary, ‘since you are disposed to be so civil, you shall have another job in your own best way — a little cast of state politics — a crime punishable *per Legem Juliam*, Mr. Sweepclean. Hark thee hither.’

And, after a whisper of five minutes, he gave him a slip of paper, on receiving which the messenger mounted his horse, and, with one of his assistants, rode away

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pretty sharply. The fellow who remained seemed to delay his operations purposely, proceeded in the rest of his duty very slowly, and with the caution and precision of one who feels himself overlooked by a skillful and severe inspector.

In the meantime Oldbuck, taking his nephew by the arm, led him into the house, and they were ushered into the presence of Sir Arthur Wardour, who, in a flutter between wounded pride, agonised apprehension, and vain attempts to disguise both under a show of indifference, exhibited a spectacle of painful interest.

‘Happy to see you, Mr. Oldbuck, always happy to see my friends in fair weather or foul,’ said the poor Baronet, struggling not for composure, but for gaiety, an affectation which was strongly contrasted by the nervous and protracted grasp of his hand, and the agitation of his whole demeanour — ‘I am happy to see you. You are riding, I see; I hope in this confusion your horses are taken good care of: I always like to have my friends’ horses looked after. Egad, they will have all my care now, for you see they are like to leave me none of my own, he! he! he! — eh, Mr. Oldbuck?’

This attempt at a jest was attended by a hysterical giggle, which poor Sir Arthur intended should sound as an indifferent laugh.

‘You know I never ride, Sir Arthur,’ said the Anti-quary.

‘I beg your pardon; but sure I saw your nephew arrive on horseback a short time since. We must look after officers’ horses, and his was as handsome a grey charger as I have seen.’

Sir Arthur was about to ring the bell, when Mr. Old-

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buck said, 'My nephew came on your own grey horse, Sir Arthur.'

'Mine!' said the poor Baronet, 'mine, was it? then the sun had been in my eyes. Well, I'm not worthy having a horse any longer, since I don't know my own when I see him.'

'Good Heaven,' thought Oldbuck, 'how is this man altered from the formal stolidity of his usual manner! he grows wanton under adversity; *sed pereunti mille figuræ*.' He then proceeded aloud: 'Sir Arthur, we must necessarily speak a little on business.'

'To be sure,' said Sir Arthur; 'but it was so good that I should not know the horse I have ridden these five years, ha! ha! ha!'

'Sir Arthur,' said the Antiquary, 'don't let us waste time which is precious; we shall have, I hope, many better seasons for jesting; *desipere in loco* is the maxim of Horace. I more than suspect this has been brought on by the villainy of Dousterswivel.'

'Don't mention his name, sir!' said Sir Arthur; and his manner entirely changed from a fluttered affectation of gaiety to all the agitation of fury: his eyes sparkled, his mouth foamed, his hands were clenched; 'don't mention his name, sir,' he vociferated, 'unless you would see me go mad in your presence! That I should have been such a miserable dolt, such an infatuated idiot, such a beast endowed with thrice a beast's stupidity, to be led and driven and spur-galled by such a rascal, and under such ridiculous pretences. Mr. Oldbuck, I could tear myself when I think of it.'

'I only meant to say,' answered the Antiquary, 'that this fellow is like to meet his reward; and I cannot but

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think we shall frighten something out of him that may be of service to you. He has certainly had some unlawful correspondence on the other side of the water.'

'Has he? has he? has he, indeed? Then d—n the household goods, horses, and so forth: I will go to prison a happy man, Mr. Oldbuck. I hope in Heaven there's a reasonable chance of his being hanged?'

'Why, pretty fair,' said Oldbuck, willing to encourage this diversion, in hopes it might mitigate the feelings which seemed like to upset the poor man's understanding; 'honest men have stretched a rope, or the law has been sadly cheated. But this unhappy business of yours — can nothing be done? Let me see the charge.'

He took the papers; and as he read them his countenance grew hopelessly dark and disconsolate. Miss Wardour had by this time entered the apartment, and fixing her eyes on Mr. Oldbuck, as if she meant to read her fate in his looks, easily perceived, from the change in his eye and the dropping of his nether jaw, how little was to be hoped.

'We are then irremediably ruined, Mr. Oldbuck?' said the young lady.

'Irremediably! I hope not; but the instant demand is very large, and others will doubtless pour in.'

'Ay, never doubt that, Monkbarns,' said Sir Arthur; 'where the slaughter is, the eagles will be gathered together. I am like a sheep which I have seen fall down a precipice, or drop down from sickness: if you had not seen a single raven or hooded crow for a fortnight before, he will not lie on the heather ten minutes before half a dozen will be picking out his eyes (and he drew his

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hand over his own) and tearing at his heart-strings before the poor devil has time to die. But that d—d long-scented vulture that dogged me so long — you have got him fast, I hope?’

‘Fast enough,’ said the Antiquary; ‘the gentleman wished to take the wings of the morning and bolt in the what d’ye call it — the coach and four there. But he would have found twigs limed for him at Edinburgh. As it is, he never got so far, for the coach being overturned — as how could it go safe with such a Jonah? — he has had an infernal tumble, is carried into a cottage near Kittlebrig, and, to prevent all possibility of escape, I have sent your friend, Sweepclean, to bring him back to Fairport *in nomine regis*, or to act as his sick nurse at Kittlebrig, as is most fitting. And now, Sir Arthur, permit me to have some conversation with you on the present unpleasant state of your affairs, that we may see what can be done for their extrication’; and the Antiquary led the way into the library, followed by the unfortunate gentleman.

They had been shut up together for about two hours, when Miss Wardour interrupted them, with her cloak on as if prepared for a journey. Her countenance was very pale, yet expressive of the composure which characterized her disposition.

‘The messenger is returned, Mr. Oldbuck.’

‘Returned! What the devil! he has not let the fellow go?’

‘No; I understand he has carried him to confinement; and now he is returned to attend my father, and says he can wait no longer.’

A loud wrangling was now heard on the staircase, in

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which the voice of Hector predominated. 'You an officer, sir, and these ragamuffins a party! a parcel of beggarly tailor fellows! tell yourselves off by nine, and we shall know your effective strength.'

The grumbling voice of the man of law was then heard indistinctly muttering a reply, to which Hector retorted, 'Come, come, sir, this won't do; march your party, as you call them, out of this house directly, or I'll send you and them to the right about presently.'

'The devil take Hector,' said the Antiquary, hastening to the scene of action; 'his Highland blood is up again, and we shall have him fighting a duel with the bailiff. Come, Mr. Sweepclean, you must give us a little time; I know you would not wish to hurry Sir Arthur.'

'By no means, sir,' said the messenger, putting his hat off, which he had thrown on to testify defiance of Captain M'Intyre's threats; 'but your nephew, sir, holds very uncivil language, and I have borne too much of it already; and I am not justified in leaving my prisoner any longer after the instructions I received, unless I am to get payment of the sums contained in my diligence.' And he held out the caption, pointing with the awful truncheon which he held in his right hand to the formidable line of figures jotted upon the back thereof.

Hector, on the other hand, though silent from respect to his uncle, answered this gesture by shaking his clenched fist at the messenger, with a frown of Highland wrath.

'Foolish boy, be quiet,' said Oldbuck, 'and come with me into the room; the man is doing his miserable duty, and you will only make matters worse by opposing him. I fear, Sir Arthur, you must accompany this man to Fair-

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port; there is no help for it in the first instance. I will accompany you to consult what farther can be done. My nephew will escort Miss Wardour to Monkbarns, which I hope she will make her residence until these unpleasant matters are settled.'

'I go with my father, Mr. Oldbuck,' said Miss Wardour, firmly; 'I have prepared his clothes and my own. I suppose we shall have the use of the carriage?'

'Anything in reason, madam,' said the messenger; 'I have ordered it out, and it's at the door. I will go on the box with the coachman; I have no desire to intrude, but two of the concurrents must attend on horseback.'

'I will attend too,' said Hector, and he ran down to secure a horse for himself.

'We must go then,' said the Antiquary.

'To jail,' said the Baronet, sighing involuntarily. 'And what of that?' he resumed, in a tone affectedly cheerful; 'it is only a house we can't get out of, after all. Suppose a fit of the gout, and Knockwinnock would be the same. Ay, ay, Monkbarns, we'll call it a fit of the gout without the d—d pain.'

But his eyes swelled with tears as he spoke, and his faltering accent marked how much this assumed gaiety cost him. The Antiquary wrung his hand, and, like the Indian Banians, who drive the real terms of an important bargain by signs, while they are apparently talking of indifferent matters, the hand of Sir Arthur, by its convulsive return of the grasp, expressed his sense of gratitude to his friend, and the real state of his internal agony. They stepped slowly down the magnificent staircase, every well-known object seeming to the unfortunate father and daughter to assume a more prominent

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and distinct appearance than usual, as if to press themselves on their notice for the last time.

At the first landing-place Sir Arthur made an agonized pause; and as he observed the Antiquary look at him anxiously, he said with assumed dignity — ‘Yes, Mr. Oldbuck, the descendant of an ancient line — the representative of Richard Red-hand and Gamelyn de Guardover — may be pardoned a sigh when he leaves the castle of his fathers thus poorly escorted. When I was sent to the Tower with my late father, in the year 1745, it was upon a charge becoming our birth — upon an accusation of high treason, Mr. Oldbuck. We were escorted from Highgate by a troop of life-guards, and committed upon a secretary of state’s warrant; and now here I am, in my old age, dragged from my household by a miserable creature like that (pointing to the messenger) and for a paltry concern of pounds, shillings, and pence.’

‘At least,’ said Oldbuck, ‘you have now the company of a dutiful daughter and a sincere friend, if you will permit me to say so, and that may be some consolation, even without the certainty that there can be no hanging, drawing, or quartering on the present occasion. But I hear that choleric boy as loud as ever. I hope to God he has got into no new broil! It was an accursed chance that brought him here at all.’

In fact, a sudden clamour, in which the loud voice and somewhat northern accent of Hector were again preëminently distinguished, broke off this conversation. The cause we must refer to the next chapter.

CHAPTER XLIII

Fortune, you say, flies from us. She but circles,
Like the fleet sea-bird round the fowler's skiff,
Lost in the mist one moment, and the next
Brushing the white sail with her whiter wing,
As if to court the aim. Experience watches,
And has her on the wheel.

Old Play.

THE shout of triumph in Hector's warlike tones was not easily distinguished from that of battle. But as he rushed upstairs with a packet in his hand, exclaiming, 'Long life to an old soldier! here comes Edie with a whole budget of good news!' it became obvious that his present cause of clamour was of an agreeable nature. He delivered the letter to Oldbuck, shook Sir Arthur heartily by the hand, and wished Miss Wardour joy, with all the frankness of Highland congratulation. The messenger, who had a kind of instinctive terror for Captain M'Intyre, drew towards his prisoner, keeping an eye of caution on the soldier's motions.

'Don't suppose I shall trouble myself about you, you dirty fellow,' said the soldier. 'There's a guinea for the fright I have given you; and here comes an old Forty-Two man, who is a fitter match for you than I am.'

The messenger (one of those dogs who are not too scornful to eat dirty puddings) caught in his hand the guinea which Hector chucked at his face, and abode warily and carefully the turn which matters were now to take. All voices meanwhile were loud in inquiries, which no one was in a hurry to answer.

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‘What is the matter, Captain M’Intyre?’ said Sir Arthur.

‘Ask old Edie,’ said Hector; ‘I only know all’s safe and well.’

‘What is all this, Edie?’ said Miss Wardour to the mendicant.

‘Your leddyship maun ask Monkbarns, for he has gotten the yepistolary correspondensh.’

‘God save the king!’ exclaimed the Antiquary, at the first glance at the contents of his packet, and, surprised at once out of decorum, philosophy, and phlegm, he skimmed his cocked hat in the air, from which it descended not again, being caught in its fall by a branch of the chandelier. He next, looking joyously round, laid a grasp on his wig, which he perhaps would have sent after the beaver, had not Edie stopped his hand, exclaiming, ‘Lordsake! he’s gaun gyte; mind Caxon’s no here to repair the damage.’

Every person now assailed the Antiquary, clamouring to know the cause of so sudden a transport, when, somewhat ashamed of his rapture, he fairly turned tail, like a fox at the cry of a pack of hounds, and, ascending the stair by two steps at a time, gained the upper landing-place, where, turning round, he addressed the astonished audience as follows:—

‘My good friends, *favete linguis*. To give you information, I must first, according to logicians, be possessed of it myself; and therefore, with your leaves, I will retire into the library to examine these papers. Sir Arthur and Miss Wardour will have the goodness to step into the parlour; Mr. Sweepclean, *secede paulisper*, or, in your own language, grant us a supersedere of diligence for five

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minutes. Hector, draw off your forces and make your bear-garden flourish elsewhere; and, finally, be all of good cheer till my return, which will be *instantly*.'

The contents of the packet were indeed so little expected that the Antiquary might be pardoned, first his ecstasy, and next his desire of delaying to communicate the intelligence they conveyed, until it was arranged and digested in his own mind.

Within the envelope was a letter addressed to Jonathan Oldbuck, Esq., of Monkbarns, of the following purport:—

'DEAR SIR, — To you, as my father's proved and valued friend, I venture to address myself, being detained here by military duty of a very pressing nature. You must by this time be acquainted with the entangled state of our affairs; and I know it will give you great pleasure to learn that I am as fortunately as unexpectedly placed in a situation to give effectual assistance for extricating them. I understand Sir Arthur is threatened with severe measures by persons who acted formerly as his agents; and, by advice of a creditable man of business here, I have procured the inclosed writing, which I understand will stop their proceedings until their claim shall be legally discussed and brought down to its proper amount. I also inclose bills to the amount of one thousand pounds to pay any other pressing demands, and request of your friendship to apply them according to your discretion. You will be surprised I give you this trouble, when it would seem more natural to address my father directly in his own affairs. But I have yet had no assurance that his eyes

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are opened to the character of a person against whom you have often, I know, warned him, and whose baneful influence has been the occasion of these distresses. And as I owe the means of relieving Sir Arthur to the generosity of a matchless friend, it is my duty to take the most certain measures for the supplies being devoted to the purpose for which they were destined, and I know your wisdom and kindness will see that it is done. My friend, as he claims an interest in your regard, will explain some views of his own in the inclosed letter. The state of the post-office at Fairport being rather notorious, I must send this letter to Tannonburgh; but the old man Ochiltree, whom particular circumstances have recommended as trustworthy, has information when the packet is likely to reach that place, and will take care to forward it. I expect to have soon an opportunity to apologise in person for the trouble I now give, and have the honour to be your very faithful servant,

‘REGINALD GAMELYN WARDOUR.

‘Edinburgh, 6th August, 179-.’

The Antiquary hastily broke the seal of the inclosure, the contents of which gave him equal surprise and pleasure. When he had in some measure composed himself after such unexpected tidings, he inspected the other papers carefully, which all related to business; put the bills into his pocket-book, and wrote a short acknowledgment to be despatched by that day's post, for he was extremely methodical in money matters; and, lastly, fraught with all the importance of disclosure, he descended to the parlour.

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‘Sweepclean,’ said he, as he entered, to the officer, who stood respectfully at the door, ‘you must sweep yourself clean out of Knockwinnock Castle with all your followers, tag-rag and bob-tail. See’st thou this paper, man?’

‘A sist on a bill o’ suspension,’ said the messenger, with a disappointed look; ‘I thought it would be a queer thing if ultimate diligence was to be done against sic a gentleman as Sir Arthur. Weel, sir, I’se go my ways with my party. And who’s to pay my charges?’

‘They who employed thee,’ replied Oldbuck, ‘as thou full well dost know. But here comes another express: this is a day of news, I think.’

This was Mr. Mailsetter on his mare from Fairport, with a letter for Sir Arthur, another to the messenger, both of which, he said, he was directed to forward instantly. The messenger opened his, observing that Greenhorn and Grinderson were good enough men for his expenses, and here was a letter from them desiring him to stop the diligence. Accordingly, he immediately left the apartment, and, staying no longer than to gather his posse together, he did then, in the phrase of Hector, who watched his departure as a jealous mastiff eyes the retreat of a repulsed beggar, evacuate Flanders.

Sir Arthur’s letter was from Mr. Greenhorn, and a curiosity in its way. We give it, with the worthy Baronet’s comments:—

‘SIR — [Oh! I am *dear* sir no longer; folks are only dear to Messrs. Greenhorn and Grinderson when they are in adversity]—Sir, I am much concerned to learn, on my return from the country, where I was called on

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particular business [a bet on the sweepstakes, I suppose], that my partner had the impropriety, in my absence, to undertake the concerns of Messrs. Goldiebirds in preference to yours, and had written to you in an unbecoming manner. I beg to make my most humble apology, as well as Mr. Grinderson's [come, I see he can write for himself and partner too], and trust it is impossible you can think me forgetful of, or ungrateful for, the constant patronage which my family [*his* family! curse him for a puppy!] have uniformly experienced from that of Knockwinnock. I am sorry to find, from an interview I had this day with Mr. Wardour, that he is much irritated, and, I must own, with apparent reason. But, in order to remedy as much as in me lies the mistake of which he complains [pretty mistake, indeed! to clap his patron into jail], I have sent this express to discharge all proceedings against your person or property; and at the same time to transmit my respectful apology. I have only to add, that Mr. Grinderson is of opinion that, if restored to your confidence, he could point out circumstances connected with Messrs. Goldiebirds' present claim which would greatly reduce its amount [so, so, willing to play the rogue on either side]; and that there is not the slightest hurry in settling the balance of your accompt with us; and that I am, for Mr. G. as well as myself, Dear Sir [O, ay he has written himself into an approach to familiarity], your much obliged and most humble servant,

GILBERT GREENHORN.'

'Well said, Mr. Gilbert Greenhorn,' said Monk-barns. 'I see now there is some use in having two at-

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torneys in one firm. Their movements resemble those of the man and woman in a Dutch baby-house. When it is fair weather with the client, out comes the gentleman partner to fawn like a spaniel; when it is foul, forth bolts the operative brother to pin like a bulldog. Well, I thank God that my man of business still wears an equilateral cocked hat, has a house in the Old Town, is as much afraid of a horse as I am myself, plays at golf of a Saturday, goes to the kirk of a Sunday, and, in respect he has no partner, hath only his own folly to apologise for.'

'There are some writers very honest fellows,' said Hector; 'I should like to hear any one say that my cousin, Donald M'Intyre, Strathtudlem's seventh son — the other six are in the army — is not as honest a fellow —'

'No doubt, no doubt, Hector; all the M'Intyres are so; they have it by patent, man. But I was going to say that in a profession where unbounded trust is necessarily reposed, there is nothing surprising that fools should neglect it in their idleness and tricksters abuse it in their knavery. But it is the more to the honour of those — and I will vouch for many — who unite integrity with skill and attention, and walk honourably upright where there are so many pitfalls and stumbling-blocks for those of a different character. To such men their fellow-citizens may safely entrust the care of protecting their patrimonial rights, and their country the more sacred charge of her laws and privileges.'

'They are best off, however, that hae least to do with them,' said Ochiltree, who had stretched his neck into the parlour door; for the general confusion of the fam-

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ily not having yet subsided, the domestics, like waves after the fall of a hurricane, had not yet exactly regained their due limits, but were roaming wildly through the house.

“Aha, old truepenny, art thou there?” said the Antiquary. ‘Sir Arthur, let me bring in the messenger of good luck, though he is but a lame one. You talked of the raven that scented out the slaughter from afar; but here’s a blue pigeon — somewhat of the oldest and toughest, I grant — who smelled the good news six or seven miles off, flew thither in the taxed cart, and returned with the olive branch.’

‘Ye owe it a’ to puir Robie that drave me; puir fallow,’ said the beggar, ‘he doubts he’s in disgrace wi’ my leddy and Sir Arthur.’

Robert’s repentant and bashful face was seen over the mendicant’s shoulder.

‘In disgrace with me!’ said Sir Arthur, ‘how so?’ for the irritation into which he had worked himself on occasion of the toast had been long forgotten. ‘O, I recollect. Robert, I was angry, and you were wrong; go about your work, and never answer a master that speaks to you in a passion.’

‘Nor any one else,’ said the Antiquary; ‘for “A soft answer turneth away wrath.”’

‘And tell your mother, who is so ill with the rheumatism, to come down to the housekeeper to-morrow,’ said Miss Wardour, ‘and we will see what can be of service to her.’

‘God bless your leddyship,’ said poor Robert, ‘and his honour Sir Arthur, and the young laird, and the house of Knockwinnock in a’ its branches, far and near;

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it's been a kind and a gude house to the pair this mony hundred years.'

'There,' said the Antiquary to Sir Arthur, 'we won't dispute; but there you see the gratitude of the poor people naturally turns to the civil virtues of your family. You don't hear them talk of Red-hand, or Hell-in-Harness. For me I must say, *Odi accipitrem qui semper vivit in armis*; so let us eat and drink in peace, and be joyful, Sir Knight.'

A table was quickly covered in the parlour, where the party sat joyously down to some refreshment. At the request of Oldbuck, Edie Ochiltree was permitted to sit by the sideboard in a great leathern chair, which was placed in some measure behind a screen.

'I accede to this the more readily,' said Sir Arthur, 'because I remember in my father's days that chair was occupied by Ailshie Gourley, who, for aught I know, was the last privileged fool or jester maintained by any family of distinction in Scotland.'

'Aweel, Sir Arthur,' replied the beggar, who never hesitated an instant between his friend and his jest, 'mony a wise man sits in a fule's seat, and mony a fule in a wise man's, especially in families o' distinction.'

Miss Wardour, fearing the effect of this speech (however worthy of Ailshie Gourley or any other privileged jester) upon the nerves of her father, hastened to inquire whether ale and beef should not be distributed to the servants and people whom the news had assembled around the Castle.

'Surely, my love,' said her father; 'when was it ever otherwise in our families when a siege had been raised?'

'Ay, a siege laid by Saunders Sweepclean, the bailiff,

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and raised by Edie Ochiltree, the gaberlunzie, *par nobile fratrum*,' said Oldbuck, 'and well pitted against each other in respectability. But never mind, Sir Arthur, these are such sieges and such reliefs as our time of day admits of, and our escape is not less worth commemorating in a glass of this excellent wine. Upon my credit, it is Burgundy, I think.'

'Were there anything better in the cellar,' said Miss Wardour, 'it would be all too little to regale you after your friendly exertions.'

'Say you so?' said the Antiquary; 'why, then, a cup of thanks to you, my fair enemy, and soon may you be besieged as ladies love best to be, and sign terms of capitulation in the chapel of Saint Winnox.'

Miss Wardour blushed; Hector coloured and then grew pale.

Sir Arthur answered, 'My daughter is much obliged to you, Monkbarns; but, unless you'll accept of her yourself, I really do not know where a poor knight's daughter is to seek for an alliance in these mercenary times.'

'Me, mean ye, Sir Arthur? No, not I; I will claim the privilege of the duello, and, as being unable to encounter my fair enemy myself, I will appear by my champion. But of this matter hereafter. What do you find in the papers there, Hector, that you hold your head down over them as if your nose were bleeding?'

'Nothing particular, sir; but only that, as my arm is now almost quite well, I think I shall relieve you of my company in a day or two, and go to Edinburgh. I see Major Neville is arrived there. I should like to see him.'

'Major whom?' said his uncle.

'Major Neville, sir,' answered the young soldier.

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‘And who the devil is Major Neville?’ demanded the Antiquary.

‘O, Mr. Oldbuck,’ said Sir Arthur, ‘you must remember his name frequently in the newspapers, a very distinguished young officer indeed. But I am happy to say that Mr. M’Intyre need not leave Monkbarns to see him, for my son writes that the Major is to come with him to Knockwinnock, and I need not say how happy I shall be to make the young gentlemen acquainted — unless, indeed, they are known to each other already.’

‘No, not personally,’ answered Hector; ‘but I have had occasion to hear a good deal of him, and we have several mutual friends, your son being one of them. But I must go to Edinburgh, for I see my uncle is beginning to grow tired of me, and I am afraid —’

‘That you will grow tired of him?’ interrupted Oldbuck. ‘I fear that’s past praying for. But you have forgotten that the ecstatic twelfth of August approaches and that you are engaged to meet one of Lord Glenallan’s gamekeepers, God knows where, to persecute the peaceful feathered creation.’

‘True, true, uncle, I had forgot that,’ exclaimed the volatile Hector; ‘but you said something just now that put everything out of my head.’

‘An it like your honours,’ said old Edie, thrusting his white head from behind the screen, where he had been plentifully regaling himself with ale and cold meat — ‘an it like your honours, I can tell ye something that will keep the Captain wi’ us amaist as weel as the pouting. Hear ye na the French are coming?’

‘The French, you blockhead!’ answered Oldbuck. ‘Bah!’

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‘I have not had time,’ said Sir Arthur Wardour, ‘to look over my lieutenancy correspondence for the week — indeed, I generally make a rule to read it only on Wednesdays, except in pressing cases, for I do everything by method; but from the glance I took of my letters I observed some alarm was entertained.’

‘Alarm!’ said Edie; ‘troth there’s alarm; for the provost’s gar’d the beacon light on the Halket Head be sorted up — that suld hae been sorted half a year syne — in an unco hurry, and the council hae named nae less a man than auld Caxon himsell to watch the light. Some say it was out o’ compliment to Lieutenant Taffril, for its’ neist to certain that he’ll marry Jenny Caxon; some say it’s to please your honour and Monkbarns, that wear wigs; and some say there’s some auld story about a periwig that ane o’ the bailies got and ne’er paid for. Ony way, there he is, sitting cockit up like a skart upon the tap o’ the craig, to skirl when foul weather comes.’

‘On mine honour, a pretty warder,’ said Monkbarns; ‘and what’s my wig to do all the while?’

‘I asked Caxon that very question,’ answered Ochiltree, ‘and he said he could look in ilka morning and gie’t a touch afore he gaed to his bed, for there’s another man to watch in the daytime, and Caxon says he’ll frizz your honour’s wig as weel sleeping as wauking.’

This news gave a different turn to the conversation, which ran upon national defence, and the duty of fighting for the land we live in, until it was time to part. The Antiquary and his nephew resumed their walk homeward, after parting from Knockwinnock with the warmest expressions of mutual regard, and an agreement to meet again as soon as possible.

CHAPTER XLIV

Nay, if she love me not, I care not for her: "
Shall I look pale because the maiden blooms?
Or sigh because she smiles, and smiles on others?
Not I, by Heaven! I hold my peace too dear,
To let it, like the plume upon her cap,
Shake at each nod that her caprice shall dictate.

Old Play.

‘HECTOR,’ said his uncle to Captain M’Intyre, in the course of their walk homeward, ‘I am sometimes inclined to suspect that in one respect you are a fool.’

‘If you only think me so in *one* respect, sir, I am sure you do me more grace than I expected or deserve.’

‘I mean in one particular *par excellence*,’ answered the Antiquary. ‘I have sometimes thought that you have cast your eyes upon Miss Wardour.’

‘Well, sir,’ said M’Intyre, with much composure.

‘Well, sir!’ echoed his uncle. ‘Deuce take the fellow, he answers me as if it were the most reasonable thing in the world that he, a captain in the army, and nothing at all besides, should marry the daughter of a baronet.’

‘I presume to think, sir,’ said the young Highlander, ‘there would be no degradation on Miss Wardour’s part in point of family.’

‘O, Heaven forbid we should come on that topic! No, no, equal both, both on the table-land of gentility, and qualified to look down on every *roturier* in Scotland.’

‘And in point of fortune we are pretty even, since

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neither of us have got any,' continued Hector. 'There may be an error, but I cannot plead guilty to presumption.'

'But here lies the error, then, if you call it so,' replied his uncle; 'she won't have you, Hector.'

'Indeed, sir?'

'It is very sure, Hector; and to make it double sure I must inform you that she likes another man. She misunderstood some words I once said to her, and I have since been able to guess at the interpretation she put on them. At the time I was unable to account for her hesitation and blushing; but, my poor Hector, I now understand them as a death-signal to your hopes and pretensions. So I advise you to beat your retreat, and draw off your forces as well as you can, for the fort is too well garrisoned for you to storm it.'

'I have no occasion to beat any retreat, uncle,' said Hector, holding himself very upright, and marching with a sort of dogged and offended solemnity; 'no man needs to retreat that has never advanced. There are women in Scotland besides Miss Wardour, of as good family —'

'And better taste,' said his uncle. 'Doubtless there are, Hector; and, though I cannot say but that she is one of the most accomplished as well as sensible girls I have seen, yet I doubt much of her merit would be cast away on you. A showy figure, now, with two cross feathers above her noddle — one green, one blue; who would wear a riding-habit of the regimental complexion, and drive a gig one day, and the next review the regiment on the grey trotting pony which dragged that vehicle, *hoc erat in votis* — these are the qualities that

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would subdue you, especially if she had a taste for natural history, and loved a specimen of a *phoca*.'

'It's a little hard, sir,' said Hector, 'I must have that cursed seal thrown into my face on all occasions; but I care little about it, and I shall not break my heart for Miss Wardour. She is free to choose for herself, and I wish her all happiness.'

'Magnanimously resolved, thou prop of Troy! Why, Hector, I was afraid of a scene. Your sister told me you were desperately in love with Miss Wardour.'

'Sir,' answered the young man, 'you would not have me desperately in love with a woman that does not care about me?'

'Well, nephew,' said the Antiquary, more seriously, 'there is doubtless much sense in what you say; yet I would have given a great deal, some twenty or twenty-five years since, to have been able to think as you do.'

'Anybody, I suppose, may think as they please on such subjects,' said Hector.

'Not according to the old school,' said Oldbuck; 'but, as I said before, the practice of the modern seems in this case the most prudential, though I think scarcely the most interesting. But tell me your ideas now on this prevailing subject of an invasion. The cry is still, They come.'

Hector, swallowing his mortification, which he was peculiarly anxious to conceal from his uncle's satirical observation, readily entered into a conversation which was to turn the Antiquary's thoughts from Miss Wardour and the seal. When they reached Monkbarns, the communicating to the ladies the events which had taken place at the Castle, with the counter-information of

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how long dinner had waited before the womankind had ventured to eat it in the Antiquary's absence, averted these delicate topics of discussion.

The next morning the Antiquary arose early, and, as Caxon had not yet made his appearance, he began mentally to feel the absence of the petty news and small talk, of which the ex-perruquier was a faithful reporter, and which habit had made as necessary to the Antiquary as his occasional pinch of snuff, although he held, or affected to hold, both to be of the same intrinsic value. The feeling of vacuity peculiar to such a deprivation was alleviated by the appearance of old Ochiltree sauntering beside the clipped yew and holly hedges, with the air of a person quite at home. Indeed, so familiar had he been of late, that even Juno did not bark at him, but contented herself with watching him with a close and vigilant eye. Our Antiquary stepped out in his nightgown, and instantly received and returned his greeting.

'They are coming now in good earnest, Monkbarns. I just cam frae Fairport to bring ye the news, and then I'll step away back again; the "Search" has just come into the bay, and they say she's been chased by a French fleet.'

'The "Search"?' said Oldbuck, reflecting a moment. 'Oho!'

'Ay, ay, Captain Taffril's gun-brig, the "Search."'

'What! any relation to "Search No. II"?' said Oldbuck, catching at the light which the name of the vessel seemed to throw on the mysterious chest of treasure.

The mendicant, like a man detected in a frolic, put

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his bonnet before his face, yet could not help laughing heartily. 'The deil's in you, Monkbarns, for garring odds and evens meet. Wha thought ye wad hae laid that and that thegither? Od, I am clean catch'd now.'

'I see it all,' said Oldbuck, 'as plain as the legend on a medal of high preservation: the box in which the bullion was found belonged to the gun-brig and the treasure to my phoenix?' (Edie nodded assent.) 'And was buried there that Sir Arthur might receive relief in his difficulties?'

'By me,' said Edie, 'and twa o' the brig's men; but they didna ken its contents, and thought it some bit smuggling concern o' the Captain's. I watched day and night till I saw it in the right hand; and then, when that German deevil was glowering at the lid o' the kist — they liked mutton weel that licket where the yowe lay — I think some Scottish deevil put it into my head to play him yon ither cantrip. Now, ye see, if I had said mair or less to Bailie Littlejohn, I behoved till hae come out wi' a' this story; and vexed would Mr. Lovel hae been to have it brought to light; sae I thought I would stand to ony thing rather than that.'

'I must say he has chosen his confidant well,' said Oldbuck, 'though somewhat strangely.'

'I'll say this for mysell, Monkbarns,' answered the mendicant, 'that I am the fittest man in the haill country to trust wi' siller, for I neither want it nor wish for it, nor could use it if I had it. But the lad hadna muckle choice in the matter, for he thought he was leaving the country for ever — I trust he's mistaen in that though — and the night was set in when we learned, by a strange chance, Sir Arthur's sair distress, and Lovel was obliged

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to be on board as the day dawned. But five nights afterwards the brig stood into the bay, and I met the boat by appointment, and we buried the treasure where ye fand it.'

'This was a very romantic, foolish exploit,' said Oldbuck; 'why not trust me, or any other friend?'

'The blood o' your sister's son,' replied Edie, 'was on his hands, and him maybe dead outright; what time had he to take council? or how could he ask it of you, by ony body?'

'You are right. But what if Dousterswivel had come before you?'

'There was little fear o' his coming there without Sir Arthur; he had gotten a sair gliff the night afore, and never intended to look near the place again, unless he had been brought there sting and ling. He kend weel the first pose was o' his ain hiding, and how could he expect a second? He just havered on about it to make the mair o' Sir Arthur.'

'Then how,' said Oldbuck, 'should Sir Arthur have come there unless the German had brought him?'

'Umph!' answered Edie, drily, 'I had a story about Misticot wad hae brought him forty miles, or you either. Besides, it was to be thought he would be for visiting the place he fand the first siller in; he kend na the secret o' that job. In short, the siller being in this shape, Sir Arthur in utter difficulties, and Lovel determined he should never ken the hand that helped him — for that was what he insisted maist upon — we couldna think o' a better way to fling the gear in his gate, though we simmered it and wintered it e'er sae lang. And if by ony queer mischance Doustercivil had got his claws

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on't, I was instantly to hae informed you or the sheriff o' the hail story.'

'Well, notwithstanding all these wise precautions, I think your contrivance succeeded better than such a clumsy one deserved, Edie. But how the deuce came Lovel by such a mass of silver ingots?'

'That's just what I canna tell ye. But they were put on board wi' his things at Fairport, it's like, and we stowed them into ane o' the ammunition-boxes o' the brig, baith for concealment and convenience of carriage.'

'Lord!' said Oldbuck, his recollection recurring to the earlier part of his acquaintance with Lovel; 'and this young fellow, who was putting hundreds on so strange a hazard — I must be recommending a subscription to him, and paying his bill at the Ferry! I never will pay any person's bill again, that's certain. And you kept up a constant correspondence with Lovel, I suppose?'

'I just gat ae bit scrape o' a pen frae him, to say there wad, as yesterday fell, be a packet at Tannonburgh, wi' letters o' great consequence to the Knockwinnock folk; for they jaloused the opening of our letters at Fairport. And that's as true; I hear Mrs. Mailsetter is to lose her office for looking after ither folks' business and neglecting her ain.'

'And what do you expect, now, Edie, for being the adviser, and messenger, and guard, and confidential person in all these matters?'

'Deil haet do I expect, excepting that a' the gentles will come to the gaberlunzie's burial; and maybe ye'll carry the head yoursell, as ye did puir Steenie Muckle-

backit's. What trouble was't to me? I was ganging about at ony rate. O but I was blythe when I got out of prison, though; for, I thought, what if that weary letter should come when I am closed up here like an oyster, and a' should gang wrang for want o't? And whiles I thought I maun make a clean breast and tell you a' about it; but then I couldna weel do that without contravening Mr. Lovel's positive orders, and I reckon he had to see somebody at Edinburgh afore he could do what he wussed to do for Sir Arthur and his family.'

'Well, and to your public news, Edie. So they are still coming, are they?'

'Troth, they say sae, sir; and there's come down strict orders for the forces and volunteers to be alert; and there's a clever young officer to come here forthwith to look at our means o' defence. I saw the Bailie's lass cleaning his belts and white breeks; I gae her a hand, for ye maun think she wasna ower clever at it, and sae I gat a' the news for my pains.'

'And what think you, as an old soldier?'

'Troth, I kenna; an they come sae mony as they speak o', they'll be odds against us. But there's mony yauld chields amang thae volunteers; and I maunna say muckle about them that's no weel and no very able, because I am something that gate mysell. But we'se do our best.'

'What! so your martial spirit is rising again, Edie?'

Even in our ashes glow their wonted fires!

I would not have thought you, Edie, had so much to fight for?'

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'*Me* no muckle to fight for, sir? Isna there the country to fight for, and the burnsidies that I gang daundering beside, and the hearths o' the gudewives that gie me my bit bread, and the bits o' weans that come toddling to play wi' me when I come about a landward town? Deil!' he continued, grasping his pikestaff with great emphasis, 'an I had as gude pith as I hae gude-will and a gude cause, I should gie some o' them a day's kemping.'

'Bravo, bravo, Edie! The country's in little ultimate danger when the beggar's as ready to fight for his dish as the laird for his land.'

Their further conversation reverted to the particulars of the night passed by the mendicant and Lovel in the ruins of Saint Ruth, by the details of which the Antiquary was highly amused.

'I would have given a guinea,' he said, 'to have seen the scoundrelly German under the agonies of those terrors which it is part of his own quackery to inspire into others, and trembling alternately for the fury of his patron and the apparition of some hobgoblin.'

'Troth,' said the beggar, 'there was time for him to be cowed; for ye wad hae thought the very spirit of Hell-in-Harness had taken possession o' the body o' Sir Arthur. But what will come o' the landlouper?'

'I have had a letter this morning, from which I understand he has acquitted you of the charge he brought against you, and offers to make such discoveries as will render the settlement of Sir Arthur's affairs a more easy task than we apprehended. So writes the sheriff; and adds, that he has given some private information of importance to government, in consideration of which

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I understand he will be sent back to play the knave in his own country.'

'And a' the bonny engines and wheels, and the coves and sheughs, doun at Glen Withershins yonder, what's to come o' them?' said Edie.

'I hope the men, before they are dispersed, will make a bonfire of their gimcracks, as an army destroy their artillery when forced to raise a siege. And as for the holes, Edie, I abandon them as rat-traps, for the benefit of the next wise men who may choose to drop the substance to snatch at a shadow.'

'Hech, sirs! guide us a'! to burn the engines? that's a great waste. Had ye na better try to get back part o' your hundred pounds wi' the sale o' the materials?' he continued, with a tone of affected condolence.

'Not a farthing,' said the Antiquary, peevishly, taking a turn from him, and making a step or two away. Then returning, half-smiling at his own pettishness, he said, 'Get thee into the house, Edie, and remember my council: never speak to me about a mine, or to my nephew Hector about a *phoca*, that is a sealgh, as you call it.'

'I maun be ganging my ways back to Fairport,' said the wanderer; 'I want to see what they're saying there about the invasion; but I'll mind what your honour says, no to speak to you about a sealgh, or to the Captain about the hundred pounds that you gied to Dous-ter —'

'Confound thee! I desired thee not to mention that to me.'

'Dear me!' said Edie, with affected surprise; 'weel, I thought there was naething but what your honour

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could hae studden in the way o' agreeable conversation, unless it was about the prætorian yonder, or the bodle that the packman sauld to ye for an auld coin.'

'Pshaw, pshaw,' said the Antiquary, turning from him hastily, and retreating into the house.

The mendicant looked after him a moment, and with a chuckling laugh, such as that with which a magpie or parrot applauds a successful exploit of mischief, he resumed once more the road to Fairport. His habits had given him a sort of restlessness, much increased by the pleasure he took in gathering news; and in a short time he had regained the town which he left in the morning, for no reason that he knew himself, unless just to 'hae a bit crack wi' Monkbarns.'

CHAPTER XLV

Red glared the beacon on Pownell,
On Skiddaw there were three;
The bugle-horn on moor and fell
Was heard continually.

JAMES HOGG.

THE watch who kept his watch on the hill and looked towards Birnam probably conceived himself dreaming when he first beheld the fated grove put itself into motion for its march to Dunsinane. Even so old Caxon, as, perched in his hut, he qualified his thoughts upon the approaching marriage of his daughter, and the dignity of being father-in-law to Lieutenant Taffril, with an occasional peep towards the signal-post with which his own corresponded, was not a little surprised by observing a light in that direction. He rubbed his eyes, looked again, adjusting his observation by a cross-staff which had been placed so as to bear upon the point. And behold the light increased, like a comet to the eye of the astronomer, 'with fear of change perplexing nations.'

'The Lord preserve us!' said Caxon, 'what's to be done now? But there will be wiser heads than mine to look to that, sae I'se e'en fire the beacon.'

And he lighted the beacon accordingly, which threw up to the sky a long wavering train of light, startling the sea-fowl from their nests, and reflected far beneath by the reddening billows of the sea. The brother warders of Caxon being equally diligent, caught and re-

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peated his signal. The lights glanced on headlands and capes and inland hills, and the whole district was alarmed by the signal of invasion.¹

Our Antiquary, his head wrapped warm in two double night-caps, was quietly enjoying his repose, when it was suddenly broken by the screams of his sister, his niece, and two maid-servants.

‘What the devil is the matter?’ said he, starting up in his bed; ‘womankind in my room at this hour of night! are ye all mad?’

‘The beacon, uncle!’ said Miss M’Intyre.

‘The French coming to murder us!’ screamed Miss Griselda.

‘The beacon, the beacon! the French, the French! murder, murder! and waur than murder!’ cried the two hand-maidens, like the chorus of an opera.

‘The French!’ said Oldbuck, starting up. ‘Get out of the room, womankind that you are, till I get my things on. And, hark ye, bring ye my sword.’

‘Whilk o’ them, Monkbarns?’ cried his sister, offering a Roman falchion of brass with the one hand, and with the other an Andrea Ferrara without a handle.

‘The langest, the langest,’ cried Jenny Rintherout, dragging in a two-handed sword of the twelfth century.

‘Womankind,’ said Oldbuck, in great agitation, ‘be composed, and do not give way to vain terror. Are you sure they are come?’

‘Sure! sure!’ exclaimed Jenny — ‘ower sure! a’ the sea fencibles and the land fencibles, and the volunteers

¹ See Note 4.

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and yeomanry, are on fit, and driving to Fairport as hard as horse and man can gang; and auld Mucklebackit's gane wi' the lave—muckle good he'll do. Hech, sirs! *he'll* be missed the morn wha wad hae served king and country weel!

'Give me,' said Oldbuck, 'the sword which my father wore in the year forty-five; it hath no belt or baldrick, but we'll make shift.'

So saying, he thrust the weapon through the cover of his breeches pocket. At this moment Hector entered, who had been to a neighbouring height to ascertain whether the alarm was actual.

'Where are your arms, nephew?' exclaimed Oldbuck; 'where is your double-barrelled gun, that was never out of your hand when there was no occasion for such vanities?'

'Pooh! pooh! sir,' said Hector, 'who ever took a fowling-piece on action? I have got my uniform on, you see: I hope I shall be of more use if they will give me a command than I could be with ten double-barrels. And you, sir, must get to Fairport, to give directions for quartering and maintaining the men and horses, and preventing confusion.'

'You are right, Hector: I believe I shall do as much with my head as my hand too. But here comes Sir Arthur Wardour, who, between ourselves, is not fit to accomplish much either one way or other.'

Sir Arthur was probably of a different opinion; for, dressed in his lieutenancy uniform, he was also on the road to Fairport, and called in his way to take Mr. Oldbuck with him, having had his original opinion of his sagacity much confirmed by late events. And, in spite

Arbroath



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of all the entreaties of the womankind that the Antiquary would stay to garrison Monkbarns, Mr. Oldbuck, with his nephew, instantly accepted Sir Arthur's offer.

Those who have witnessed such a scene can alone conceive the state of bustle in Fairport. The windows were glancing with a hundred lights, which, appearing and disappearing rapidly, indicated the confusion within doors. The women of lower rank assembled and clamoured in the market-place. The yeomanry, pouring from their different glens, galloped through the streets, some individually, some in parties of five or six, as they had met on the road. The drums and fifes of the volunteers beating to arms were blended with the voice of the officers, the sound of the bugles, and the tolling of the bells from the steeple. The ships in the harbour were lit up, and boats from the armed vessels added to the bustle by landing men and guns destined to assist in the defence of the place. This part of the preparations was superintended by Taffril with much activity. Two or three light vessels had already slipped their cables and stood out to sea, in order to discover the supposed enemy.

Such was the scene of general confusion when Sir Arthur Wardour, Oldbuck, and Hector made their way with difficulty into the principal square, where the town-house is situated. It was lighted up, and the magistracy, with many of the neighbouring gentlemen, were assembled. And here, as upon other occasions of the like kind in Scotland, it was remarkable how the good sense and firmness of the people supplied almost all the deficiencies of inexperience.

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The magistrates were beset by the quartermasters of the different corps for billets for men and horses. 'Let us,' said Bailie Littlejohn, 'take the horses into our warehouses and the men into our parlours, share our supper with the one and our forage with the other. We have made ourselves wealthy under a free and paternal government, and now is the time to show we know its value.'

A loud and cheerful acquiescence was given by all present, and the substance of the wealthy, with the persons of those of all ranks, were unanimously devoted to the defence of the country.

Captain M'Intyre acted on this occasion as military adviser and aid-de-camp to the principal magistrate, and displayed a degree of presence of mind and knowledge of his profession totally unexpected by his uncle, who, recollecting his usual *insouciance* and impetuosity, gazed at him with astonishment from time to time, as he remarked the calm and steady manner in which he explained the various measures of precaution that his experience suggested, and gave directions for executing them. He found the different corps in good order, considering the irregular materials of which they were composed, in great force of numbers, and high confidence and spirits. And so much did military experience at that moment overbalance all other claims to consequence that even old Edie, instead of being left, like Diogenes at Sinope, to roll his tub when all around were preparing for defence, had the duty assigned him of superintending the serving out of the ammunition, which he executed with much discretion.

Two things were still anxiously expected — the pre-

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sence of the Glenallan volunteers, who, in consideration of the importance of that family, had been formed into a separate corps, and the arrival of the officer before announced, to whom the measures of defence on that coast had been committed by the commander-in-chief, and whose commission would entitle him to take upon himself the full disposal of the military force.

At length the bugles of the Glenallan yeomanry were heard, and the Earl himself, to the surprise of all who knew his habits and state of health, appeared at their head in uniform. They formed a very handsome and well-mounted squadron, formed entirely out of the Earl's Lowland tenants, and were followed by a regiment of five hundred men, completely equipped in the Highland dress, whom he had brought down from the upland glens, with their pipes playing in the van. The clean and serviceable appearance of this band of feudal dependents called forth the admiration of Captain M'Intyre; but his uncle was still more struck by the manner in which, upon this crisis, the ancient military spirit of his house seemed to animate and invigorate the decayed frame of the Earl, their leader. He claimed and obtained for himself and his followers the post most likely to be that of danger, displayed great alacrity in making the necessary dispositions, and showed equal acuteness in discussing their propriety. Morning broke in upon the military councils of Fairport while all concerned were still eagerly engaged in taking precautions for their defence.

At length a cry among the people announced, 'There's the brave Major Neville come at last, with

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another officer'; and their post-chaise and four drove into the square, amidst the huzzas of the volunteers and inhabitants. The magistrates, with their assessors of the lieutenancy, hastened to the door of their town-house to receive him; but what was the surprise of all present, but most especially that of the Antiquary, when they became aware that the handsome uniform and military cap disclosed the person and features of the pacific Lovel! A warm embrace and a hearty shake of the hand were necessary to assure him that his eyes were doing him justice. Sir Arthur was no less surprised to recognize his son, Captain Wardour, in Lovel's, or rather Major Neville's company. The first words of the young officers were a positive assurance to all present that the courage and zeal which they had displayed were entirely thrown away, unless in so far as they afforded an acceptable proof of their spirit and promptitude.

'The watchman at Halket Head,' said Major Neville, 'as we discovered by an investigation which we made in our route hither, was most naturally misled by a bonfire which some idle people had made on the hill above Glen Withershins, just in the line of the beacon with which his corresponded.'

Oldbuck gave a conscious look to Sir Arthur, who returned it with one equally sheepish and a shrug of the shoulders.

'It must have been the machinery which we condemned to the flames in our wrath,' said the Antiquary, plucking up heart, though not a little ashamed of having been the cause of so much disturbance. 'The devil take Dousterswivel with all my heart! I think

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he has bequeathed us a legacy of blunders and mischief, as if he had lighted some train of fireworks at his departure. I wonder what cracker will go off next among our shins. But yonder comes the prudent Caxon. Hold up your head, you ass; your betters must bear the blame for you. And here, take this what-d'ye-call-it (giving him his sword). I wonder what I would have said yesterday to any man that would have told me I was to stick such an appendage to my tail.'

Here he found his arm gently pressed by Lord Glenallan, who dragged him into a separate apartment. 'For God's sake, who is that young gentleman who is so strikingly like —'

'Like the unfortunate Eveline,' interrupted Oldbuck. 'I felt my heart warm to him from the first, and your lordship has suggested the very cause.'

'But who — who is he?' continued Lord Glenallan, holding the Antiquary with a convulsive grasp.

'Formerly I would have called him Lovel, but now he turns out to be Major Neville.'

'Whom my brother brought up as his natural son, whom he made his heir. Gracious Heaven! the child of my Eveline!'

'Hold, my lord — hold!' said Oldbuck; 'do not give too hasty way to such a presumption; what probability is there?'

'Probability! none. There is certainty — absolute certainty. The agent I mentioned to you wrote me the whole story. I received it yesterday, not sooner. Bring him, for God's sake, that a father's eyes may bless him before he departs.'

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‘I will; but, for your own sake and his, give him a few moments for preparation.’

And, determined to make still further investigation before yielding his entire conviction to so strange a tale, he sought out Major Neville, and found him expediting the necessary measures for dispersing the force which had been assembled.

‘Pray, Major Neville, leave this business for a moment to Captain Wardour and to Hector, with whom, I hope, you are thoroughly reconciled (Neville laughed, and shook hands with Hector across the table), and grant me a moment’s audience.’

‘You have a claim on me, Mr. Oldbuck, were my business more urgent,’ said Neville, ‘for having passed myself upon you under a false name, and rewarding your hospitality by injuring your nephew.’

‘You served him as he deserved,’ said Oldbuck; ‘though, by the way, he showed as much good sense as spirit to-day. Egad, if he would rub up his learning, and read Cæsar and Polybius and the *Stratagemata Polyæni*, I think he would rise in the army, and I will certainly lend him a lift.’

‘He is heartily deserving of it,’ said Neville; ‘and I am glad you excuse me, which you may do the more frankly when you know that I am so unfortunate as to have no better right to the name of Neville, by which I have been generally distinguished, than to that of Lovel, under which you knew me.’

‘Indeed! then I trust we shall find out one for you to which you shall have a firm and legal title.’

‘Sir! I trust you do not think the misfortune of my birth a fit subject —’

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‘By no means, young man,’ answered the Antiquary, interrupting him; ‘I believe I know more of your birth than you do yourself; and, to convince you of it, you were educated and known as a natural son of Geraldin Neville of Neville’s Burgh, in Yorkshire, and, I presume, as his destined heir?’

‘Pardon me; no such views were held out to me. I was liberally educated, and pushed forward in the army by money and interest; but I believe my supposed father long entertained some ideas of marriage, though he never carried them into effect.’

‘You say your *supposed* father? What leads you to suppose Mr. Geraldin Neville was not your real father?’

‘I know, Mr. Oldbuck, that you would not ask these questions on a point of such delicacy for the gratification of idle curiosity. I will, therefore, tell you candidly that last year, while we occupied a small town in French Flanders, I found in a convent near which I was quartered a woman who spoke remarkably good English. She was a Spaniard, her name Teresa D’Acunha. In the process of our acquaintance she discovered who I was, and made herself known to me as the person who had charge of my infancy. She dropped more than one hint of rank to which I was entitled and of injustice done to me, promising a more full disclosure in case of the death of a lady in Scotland, during whose lifetime she was determined to keep the secret. She also intimated that Mr. Geraldin Neville was not my father. We were attacked by the enemy and driven from the town, which was pillaged with savage ferocity by the republicans. The religious orders were the particular objects of their hate and cruelty.

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The convent was burned, and several nuns perished, among others Teresa, and with her all chance of knowing the story of my birth: tragic by all accounts it must have been.'

'*Raro antecedentem scelestum*, or, as I may here say, *scelestam*,' said Oldbuck, '*deseruit pœna*, even Epicureans admitted that; and what did you do upon this?'

'I remonstrated with Mr. Neville by letter, and to no purpose. I then obtained leave of absence, and threw myself at his feet, conjuring him to complete the disclosure which Teresa had begun. He refused, and, on my importunity, indignantly upbraided me with the favours he had already conferred; I thought he abused the power of a benefactor, as he was compelled to admit he had no title to that of a father, and we parted in mutual displeasure. I renounced the name of Neville, and assumed that under which you knew me. It was at this time, when residing with a friend in the north of England who favoured my disguise, that I became acquainted with Miss Wardour, and was romantic enough to follow her to Scotland. My mind wavered on various plans of life, when I resolved to apply once more to Mr. Neville for an explanation of the mystery of my birth. It was long ere I received an answer; you were present when it was put into my hands. He informed me of his bad state of health, and conjured me, for my own sake, to inquire no farther into the nature of his connexion with me, but to rest satisfied with his declaring it to be such and so intimate that he designed to constitute me his heir. When I was preparing to leave Fairport to join him, a second express brought me word that he was no more. The possession of great

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wealth was unable to suppress the remorseful feelings with which I now regarded my conduct to my benefactor, and some hints in his letter appearing to intimate that there was on my birth a deeper stain than that of ordinary illegitimacy, I remembered certain prejudices of Sir Arthur.'

'And you brooded over these melancholy ideas until you were ill, instead of coming to me for advice, and telling me the whole story?' said Oldbuck.

'Exactly; then came my quarrel with Captain M'Intyre, and my compelled departure from Fairport and its vicinity.'

'From love and from poetry — Miss Wardour and the "Caledoniad"?'

'Most true.'

'And since that time you have been occupied, I suppose, with plans for Sir Arthur's relief?'

'Yes, sir; with the assistance of Captain Wardour at Edinburgh.'

'And Edie Ochiltree here; you see I know the whole story. But how came you by the treasure?'

'It was a quantity of plate which had belonged to my uncle, and was left in the custody of a person at Fairport. Some time before his death he had sent orders that it should be melted down. He perhaps did not wish me to see the Glenallan arms upon it.'

'Well, Major Neville, or let me say Lovel, being the name in which I rather delight, you must, I believe, exchange both of your *alias's* for the style and title of the Honourable William Geraldin, commonly called Lord Geraldin.'

The Antiquary then went through the strange and

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melancholy circumstances concerning his mother's death.

'I have no doubt,' he said, 'that your uncle wished the report to be believed that the child of this unhappy marriage was no more; perhaps he might himself have an eye to the inheritance of his brother — he was then a gay wild young man. But of all intentions against your person, however much the evil conscience of Elspeth might lead her to suspect him from the agitation in which he appeared, Teresa's story and your own fully acquit him. And now, my dear sir, let me have the pleasure of introducing a son to a father.'

We will not attempt to describe such a meeting. The proofs on all sides were found to be complete, for Mr. Neville had left a distinct account of the whole transaction with his confidential steward in a sealed packet, which was not to be opened until the death of the old Countess; his motive for preserving secrecy so long appearing to have been an apprehension of the effect which the discovery, fraught with so much disgrace, must necessarily produce upon her haughty and violent temper.

In the evening of that day the yeomanry and volunteers of Glenallan drank prosperity to their young master. In a month afterwards Lord Geraldin was married to Miss Wardour, the Antiquary making the lady a present of the wedding ring, a massy circle of antique chasing, and bearing the motto of Aldobrand Oldenbuck, *Kunst macht Gunst*.

Old Edie, the most important man that ever wore a blue-gown, bowls away easily from one friend's house to another, and boasts that he never travels unless on

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a sunny day. Latterly, indeed, he has given some symptoms of becoming stationary, being frequently found in the corner of a snug cottage between Monkbarns and Knockwinnock, to which Caxon retreated upon his daughter's marriage, in order to be in the neighbourhood of the three parochial wigs, which he continues to keep in repair, though only for amusement. Edie has been heard to say, 'This is a gey bein place, and it's a comfort to hae sic a corner to sit in in a bad day.' It is thought, as he grows stiffer in the joints, he will finally settle there.

The bounty of such wealthy patrons as Lord and Lady Geraldin flowed copiously upon Mrs. Hadoway and upon the Mucklebackits. By the former it was well employed, by the latter wasted. They continue, however, to receive it, but under the administration of Edie Ochiltree; and they do not accept it without grumbling at the channel through which it is conveyed.

Hector is rising rapidly in the army, and has been more than once mentioned in the 'Gazette,' and rises proportionally high in his uncle's favour. And, what scarcely pleases the young soldier less, he has also shot two seals, and thus put an end to the Antiquary's perpetual harping upon the story of the *phoca*. People talk of a marriage between Miss M'Intyre and Captain Wardour; but this wants confirmation.

The Antiquary is a frequent visitor at Knockwinnock and Glenallan House, ostensibly for the sake of completing two essays, one on the mail-shirt of the Great Earl and the other on the left-hand gauntlet of Hell-in-Harness. He regularly inquires whether Lord Geraldin has commenced the 'Caledoniad,' and shakes

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his head at the answers he receives. *En attendant*, however, he has completed his notes, which, we believe, will be at the service of any one who chooses to make them public, without risk or expense to THE ANTIQUARY.

END OF THE ANTIQUARY

TALES OF MY LANDLORD

First Series

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
 Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's,
 If there's a hole in a' your coats,
 I rede ye tent it ;
 A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
 An' faith he'll prent it !
BURNS.

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Ahora bien, dixo il Cura, traedme, senior huésped, aqueles libros, que los quiero ver. Que me place, respondió el, y entrando en su aposento, sacó dél una maletilla vieja cerrada con una cadenilla, y abriéndola halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra escritos de mano. — DON QUIXOTE, Parte I, Capitulo xxxii.

It is mighty well, said the priest; pray, landlord, bring me those books, for I have a mind to see them. With all my heart, answered the host; and going to his chamber, he brought out a little old cloke-bag, with a padlock and chain to it, and opening it, he took out three large volumes, and some manuscript papers written in a fine character. — JARVIS'S *Translation*.

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THE ideal being who is here presented as residing in solitude, and haunted by a consciousness of his own deformity and a suspicion of his being generally subjected to the scorn of his fellow-men, is not altogether imaginary. An individual existed many years since, under the Author's observation, who suggested such a character. This poor unfortunate man's name was David Ritchie, a native of Tweeddale. He was the son of a labourer in the slate-quarries of Stobo, and must have been born in the misshapen form which he exhibited, though he sometimes imputed it to ill-usage when in infancy. He was bred a brush-maker at Edinburgh, and had wandered to several places, working at his trade, from all which he was chased by the disagreeable attention which his hideous singularity of form and face attracted wherever he came. The Author understood him to say he had even been in Dublin.

Tired at length of being the object of shouts, laughter, and derision, David Ritchie resolved, like a deer hunted from the herd, to retreat to some wilderness, where he might have the least possible communication with the world which scoffed at him. He settled himself, with this view, upon a patch of wild moorland at the bottom of a bank on the farm of Woodhouse, in the sequestered vale of the small river Manor, in Peeblesshire. The few people who had occasion to pass that way were much surprised, and some superstitious persons a little alarmed, to see so strange a figure as Bow'd Davie (i.e.

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Crooked David) employed in a task for which he seemed so totally unfit as that of erecting a house. The cottage which he built was extremely small, but the walls, as well as those of a little garden that surrounded it, were constructed with an ambitious degree of solidity, being composed of layers of large stones and turf; and some of the corner stones were so weighty as to puzzle the spectators how such a person as the architect could possibly have raised them. In fact, David received from passengers, or those who came attracted by curiosity, a good deal of assistance; and as no one knew how much aid had been given by others, the wonder of each individual remained undiminished.

The proprietor of the ground, the late Sir James Nasmythe, Baronet, chanced to pass this singular dwelling, which, having been placed there without right or leave asked or given, formed an exact parallel with Falstaff's simile of a 'fair house built on another's ground'; so that poor David might have lost his edifice by mistaking the property where he had erected it. Of course, the proprietor entertained no idea of exacting such a forfeiture, but readily sanctioned the harmless encroachment.

The personal description of Elshender of Mucklestone Moor has been generally allowed to be a tolerably exact and unexaggerated portrait of David of Manor Water. He was not quite three feet and a half high, since he could stand upright in the door of his mansion, which was just that height. The following particulars concerning his figure and temper occur in the *Scots Magazine* for 1817, and are now understood to have been communicated by the ingenious Mr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, who has recorded with much spirit the traditions

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of the Good Town, and, in other publications, largely and agreeably added to the stock of our popular antiquities. He is the countryman of David Ritchie, and had the best access to collect anecdotes of him.

‘His skull,’ says this authority, ‘which was of an oblong and rather unusual shape, was said to be of such strength that he could strike it with ease through the panel of a door or the end of a barrel. His laugh is said to have been quite horrible; and his screech-owl voice, shrill, uncouth, and dissonant, corresponded well with his other peculiarities.

‘There was nothing very uncommon about his dress. He usually wore an old slouched hat when he went abroad; and when at home a sort of cowl or night-cap. He never wore shoes, being unable to adapt them to his misshapen fin-like feet, but always had both feet and legs quite concealed, and wrapt up with pieces of cloth. He always walked with a sort of pole or pike-staff, considerably taller than himself. His habits were, in many respects, singular, and indicated a mind congenial to its uncouth tabernacle. A jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper was his prominent characteristic. The sense of his deformity haunted him like a phantom; and the insults and scorn to which this exposed him had poisoned his heart with fierce and bitter feelings, which, from other points in his character, do not appear to have been more largely infused into his original temperament than that of his fellow-men.

‘He detested children, on account of their propensity to insult and persecute him. To strangers he was generally reserved, crabbed, and surly; and though he by no means refused assistance or charity, he seldom either expressed or exhibited much gratitude. Even towards persons who had been his greatest benefactors, and who possessed the greatest share of his good-will, he frequently displayed much caprice and jealousy. A lady who had known him from his infancy, and who has furnished us in the most obliging manner with some particulars respecting him, says that, although Davie showed as much respect and attachment to her father’s family as it was in his nature to show to any, yet they were always obliged to be very cautious in their deportment towards him. One day, having gone to visit him with another lady, he took them through his garden, and was showing them, with

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much pride and good-humour, all his rich and tastefully-assorted borders, when they happened to stop near a plot of cabbages which had been somewhat injured by the caterpillars. Davie, observing one of the ladies smile, instantly assumed his savage, scowling aspect, rushed among the cabbages, and dashed them to pieces with his *kent*, exclaiming, "I hate the worms, for they mock me!"

'Another lady, likewise a friend and old acquaintance of his, very unintentionally gave David mortal offence on a similar occasion. Throwing back his jealous glance as he was ushering her into his garden, he fancied he observed her spit, and exclaimed with great ferocity, "Am I a toad, woman! that ye spit at me — that ye spit at me?" and without listening to any answer or excuse, drove her out of his garden with imprecations and insult. When irritated by persons for whom he entertained little respect, his misanthropy displayed itself in words, and sometimes in actions, of still greater rudeness; and he used on such occasions the most unusual and singularly savage imprecations and threats.'¹

Nature maintains a certain balance of good and evil in all her works; and there is no state perhaps so utterly desolate which does not possess some source of gratification peculiar to itself. This poor man, whose misanthropy was founded in a sense of his own preternatural deformity, had yet his own particular enjoyments. Driven into solitude, he became an admirer of the beauties of nature. His garden, which he sedulously cultivated, and from a piece of wild moorland made a very productive spot, was his pride and his delight; but he was also an admirer of more natural beauty: the soft sweep of the green hill, the bubbling of a clear fountain, or the complexities of a wild thicket, were scenes on which he often gazed for hours, and, as he said, with inexpressible delight. It was perhaps for this reason that he was fond of Shenstone's pastorals and some parts of *Paradise Lost*. The Author has heard his most un-

¹ *Scots Magazine*, vol. LXXX, p. 207.

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musical voice repeat the celebrated description of Paradise, which he seemed fully to appreciate. His other studies were of a different cast, chiefly polemical. He never went to the parish church, and was therefore suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions, though his objection was probably to the concourse of spectators to whom he must have exposed his unseemly deformity. He spoke of a future state with intense feeling, and even with tears. He expressed disgust at the idea of his remains being mixed with the common rubbish, as he called it, of the churchyard, and selected with his usual taste a beautiful and wild spot in the glen where he had his hermitage, in which to take his last repose. He changed his mind, however, and was finally interred in the common burial-ground of Manor parish.

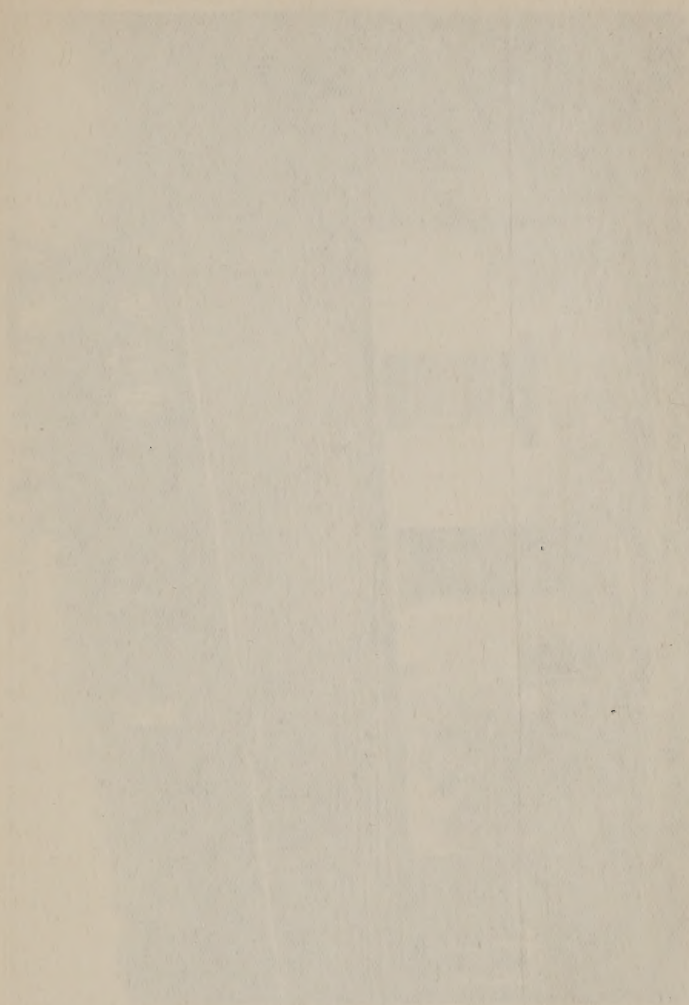
The Author has invested Wise Elshie with some qualities which made him appear, in the eyes of the vulgar, a man possessed of supernatural power. Common fame paid David Ritchie a similar compliment, for some of the poor and ignorant, as well as all the children, in the neighbourhood, held him to be what is called 'uncanny.' He himself did not altogether discourage the idea; it enlarged his very limited circle of power, and in so far gratified his conceit; and it soothed his misanthropy, by increasing his means of giving terror or pain. But even in a rude Scottish glen thirty years back the fear of sorcery was very much out of date.

David Ritchie affected to frequent solitary scenes, especially such as were supposed to be haunted, and valued himself upon his courage in doing so. To be sure, he had little chance of meeting anything more ugly than himself. At heart he was superstitious, and planted

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many rowans (mountain ashes) around his hut, as a certain defence against necromancy. For the same reason, doubtless, he desired to have rowan-trees set above his grave.

We have stated that David Ritchie loved objects of natural beauty. His only living favourites were a dog and a cat, to which he was particularly attached, and his bees, which he treated with great care. He took a sister, latterly, to live in a hut adjacent to his own, but he did not permit her to enter it. She was weak in intellect, but not deformed in person; simple, or rather silly, but not, like her brother, sullen or bizarre. David was never affectionate to her — it was not in his nature; but he endured her. He maintained himself and her by the sale of the produce of their garden and bee-hives; and, latterly, they had a small allowance from the parish. Indeed, in the simple and patriarchal state in which the country then was, persons in the situation of David and his sister were sure to be supported. They had only to apply to the next gentleman or respectable farmer, and were sure to find them equally ready and willing to supply their very moderate wants. David often received gratuities from strangers, which he never asked, never refused, and never seemed to consider as an obligation. He had a right, indeed, to regard himself as one of Nature's paupers, to whom she gave a title to be maintained by his kind, even by that deformity which closed against him all ordinary ways of supporting himself by his own labour. Besides, a bag was suspended in the mill for David Ritchie's benefit; and those who were carrying home a melder of meal seldom failed to add a gowpen to the alms-bag of the deformed cripple. In short, David had



Cottage of the Black Dwarf



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no occasion for money, save to purchase snuff, his only luxury, in which he indulged himself liberally. When he died, in the beginning of the present century, he was found to have hoarded about twenty pounds, a habit very consistent with his disposition; for wealth is power, and power was what David Ritchie desired to possess, as a compensation for his exclusion from human society.

His sister survived till the publication of the tale to which this brief notice forms the introduction; and the Author is sorry to learn that a sort of 'local sympathy,' and the curiosity then expressed concerning the Author of *Waverley* and the subjects of his Novels, exposed the poor woman to inquiries which gave her pain. When pressed about her brother's peculiarities, she asked, in her turn, why they would not permit the dead to rest? To others, who pressed for some account of her parents, she answered in the same tone of feeling.

The Author saw this poor, and, it may be said, unhappy, man in autumn 1797. Being then, as he has the happiness still to remain, connected by ties of intimate friendship with the family of the venerable Dr. Adam Fergusson, the philosopher and historian, who then resided at the mansion-house of Halyards, in the vale of Manor, about a mile from Ritchie's hermitage, the Author was upon a visit at Halyards, which lasted for several days, and was made acquainted with this singular anchorite, whom Dr. Fergusson considered as an extraordinary character, and whom he assisted in various ways, particularly by the occasional loan of books. Though the taste of the philosopher and the poor peasant did not, it may be supposed, always corre-

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spond,¹ Dr. Fergusson considered him as a man of a powerful capacity and original ideas, but whose mind was thrown off its just bias by a predominant degree of self-love and self-opinion, galled by the sense of ridicule and contempt, and avenging itself upon society, in idea at least, by a gloomy misanthropy.

David Ritchie, besides the utter obscurity of his life while in existence, had been dead for many years when it occurred to the Author that such a character might be made a powerful agent in fictitious narrative. He accordingly sketched that of Elshie of the Mucklestone Moor. The story was intended to be longer, and the catastrophe more artificially brought out; but a friendly critic, to whose opinion I subjected the work in its progress, was of opinion that the idea of the Solitary was of a kind too revolting, and more likely to disgust than to interest the reader. As I had good right to consider my adviser as an excellent judge of public opinion, I got off my subject by hastening the story to an end as fast as it was possible; and, by huddling into one volume a tale which was designed to occupy two, have perhaps produced a narrative as much disproportioned and distorted as the Black Dwarf who is its subject.

¹ I remember David was particularly anxious to see a book which he called, I think, *Letters to the Elect Ladies*, and which, he said, was the best composition he had ever read; but Dr. Fergusson's library did not supply the volume.

THE BLACK DWARF

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Hast any philosophy in thee, Shepherd?

As You Like It.

It was a fine April morning (excepting that it had snowed hard the night before, and the ground remained covered with a dazzling mantle of six inches in depth) when two horsemen rode up to the Wallace Inn. The first was a strong, tall, powerful man in a grey riding-coat, having a hat covered with wax-cloth, a huge silver-mounted horsewhip, boots, and dreadnought overalls. He was mounted on a large strong brown mare, rough in coat, but well in condition, with a saddle of the yeomanry cut and a double-bitted military bridle. The man who accompanied him was apparently his servant; he rode a shaggy little grey pony, had a blue bonnet on his head, and a large check napkin folded about his neck, wore a pair of long blue worsted hose instead of boots, had his gloveless hands much stained with tar, and observed an air of deference and respect towards his companion, but without any of those indications of precedence and punctilio which are preserved between the gentry and their domestics. On the contrary, the two travellers entered the courtyard abreast, and the concluding sentence of

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the conversation which had been carrying on betwixt them was a joint ejaculation, 'Lord guide us, an this weather last what will come o' the lambs!' The hint was sufficient for my Landlord, who, advancing to take the horse of the principal person, and holding him by the reins as he dismounted, while his hostler rendered the same service to the attendant, welcomed the stranger to Gandercleugh, and in the same breath inquired, 'What news from the South Hielands?'

'News?' said the farmer, 'bad eneugh news, I think. An we can carry through the yowes it will be a' we can do; we maun e'en leave the lambs to the Black Dwarf's care.'

'Ay, ay,' subjoined the old shepherd (for such he was), shaking his head, 'he'll be unco busy amang the morts this season.'

'The Black Dwarf!' said *my learned friend and patron*,¹ Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, 'and what sort of a personage may he be?'

'Hout awa', man,' answered the farmer, 'ye'll hae heard o' Canny Elshie the Black Dwarf, or I am muckle mistaen. A' the warld tells tales about him, but it's but daft nonsense after a'; I dinna believe a word o't frae beginning to end.'

'Your father believed it unco stievely, though,' said the old man, to whom the scepticism of his master gave obvious displeasure.

'Ay, very true, Bauldie, but that was in the time o' the blackfaces; they believed a hantle queer things in thae days, that naebody heeds since the lang sheep cam in.'

¹ See Note 1.

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‘The mair’s the pity — the mair’s the pity,’ said the old man. ‘Your father — and sae I have aften tell’d ye, maister — wad hae been sair vexed to hae seen the auld peel-house wa’s pu’d down to make park dykes; and the bonny broomy knowe, where he liked sae weel to sit at e’en, wi’ his plaid about him, and look at the kye as they cam down the loaning — ill wad he hae liked to hae seen that braw sunny knowe a’ riven out wi’ the pleugh in the fashion it is at this day.’

‘Hout, Bauldie,’ replied the principal, ‘tak ye that dram the landlord’s offering ye, and never fash your head about the changes o’ the warld, sae lang as ye’re blythe and bien yoursell.’

‘Wussing your health, sirs,’ said the shepherd; and having taken off his glass, and observed the whisky was the right thing, he continued, ‘It’s no for the like o’ us to be judging, to be sure; but it was a bonny knowe that broomy knowe, and an unco braw shelter for the lambs in a severe morning like this.’

‘Ay,’ said his patron, ‘but ye ken we maun hae turnips for the lang sheep, billie, and muckle hard wark to get them, baith wi’ the pleugh and the howe; and that wad sort ill wi’ sitting on the broomy knowe and crackin’ about Black Dwarfs and siccan clavers, as was the gate lang syne, when the short sheep were in the fashion.’

‘Aweel, aweel, maister,’ said the attendant, ‘short sheep had short rents, I’m thinking.’

Here my *worthy and learned* patron again interposed, and observed, ‘that he could never perceive any material difference in point of longitude between one sheep and another.’

This occasioned a loud hoarse laugh on the part of the

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farmer, and an astonished stare on the part of the shepherd. 'It's the woo', man — it's the woo', and no the beasts themselfs, that makes them be ca'd lang or short. I believe if ye were to measure their backs the short sheep wad be rather the langer-bodied o' the twa; but it's the woo' that pays the rent in thae days, and it had muckle need. Odd, Bauldie says very true,' he continued after a moment's reflection, 'short sheep did make short rents; my father paid for our steading just three-score punds, and it stands me in three hundred, plack and bawbee. And that's very true, I hae nae time to be standing here clavering. Landlord, get us our breakfast, and see an' get the yauds fed. I am for down to Christy Wilson's, to see if him and me can gree about the luck-penny I am to gie him for his year-aulds. We had drank sax mutchkins to the making the bargain at St. Boswell's Fair, and some gate we canna gree upon the particulars preceesely, for as muckle time as we took about it; I doubt we draw to a plea. But hear ye, neighbour,' addressing my *worthy and learned* patron, 'if ye want to hear ony thing about lang or short sheep, I will be back here to my kail against ane o'clock; or, if ye want ony auld-warld stories about the Black Dwarf, and sic-like, if ye'll ware a half mutchkin upon Bauldie there, he'll crack t'ye like a pen-gun. And I'se gie ye a mutchkin mysell, man, if I can settle weel wi' Christy Wilson.'

The farmer returned at the hour appointed, and with him came Christy Wilson, their difference having been fortunately settled without an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe. My *learned and worthy* patron failed not to attend, both on account of the refreshment promised to the mind and to the body, *although he is known*

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to partake of the latter in a very moderate degree; and the party, with which my Landlord was associated, continued to sit late in the evening, seasoning their liquor with many choice tales and songs. The last incident which I recollect was my *learned and worthy* patron falling from his chair, just as he concluded a long lecture upon temperance, by reciting from the 'Gentle Shepherd' a couplet, which he *right happily* transferred from the vice of avarice to that of ebriety:

He that has just enough may soundly sleep,
The owercome only fashes folk to keep.

In the course of the evening the Black Dwarf¹ had not been forgotten, and the old shepherd, Bauldie, told so many stories of him that they excited a good deal of interest. It also appeared, though not till the third punch-bowl was emptied, that much of the farmer's scepticism on the subject was affected, as evincing a liberality of thinking and a freedom from ancient prejudices becoming a man who paid three hundred pounds a year of rent, while, in fact, he had a lurking belief in the traditions of his forefathers. After my usual manner I made farther inquiries of other persons connected with the wild and pastoral district in which the scene of the following narrative is placed, and I was fortunate enough to recover many links of the story, not generally known, and which account, at least in some degree, for the circumstances of exaggerated marvel with which superstition has attired it in the more vulgar traditions.

¹ See Note 2.

CHAPTER II

Will none but Hearne the Hunter serve your turn?

Merry Wives of Windsor.

IN one of the most remote districts of the south of Scotland, where an ideal line, drawn along the tops of lofty and bleak mountains, separates that land from her sister kingdom, a young man called Halbert or Hobbie Elliot, a substantial farmer, who boasted his descent from old Martin Elliot of the Preakin Tower, noted in Border story and song, was on his return from deer-stalking. The deer, once so numerous among these solitary wastes, were now reduced to a very few herds, which, sheltering themselves in the most remote and inaccessible recesses, rendered the task of pursuing them equally toilsome and precarious. There were, however, found many youth of the country ardently attached to this sport, with all its dangers and fatigues. The sword had been sheathed upon the Borders for more than a hundred years by the peaceful Union of the Crowns in the reign of James the First of Great Britain. Still the country retained traces of what it had been in former days: the inhabitants, their more peaceful avocations having been repeatedly interrupted by the civil wars of the preceding century, were scarce yet broken in to the habits of regular industry, sheep-farming had not been introduced upon any considerable scale, and the feeding of black cattle was the chief purpose to which the hills and valleys were applied. Near to the farmer's house the

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tenant usually contrived to raise such a crop of oats or barley as afforded meal for his family; and the whole of this slovenly and imperfect mode of cultivation left much time upon his own hands and those of his domestics. This was usually employed by the young men in hunting and fishing; and the spirit of adventure, which formerly led to raids and forays in the same districts, was still to be discovered in the eagerness with which they pursued those rural sports.

The more high-spirited among the youth were, about the time that our narrative begins, expecting, rather with hope than apprehension, an opportunity of emulating their fathers in their military achievements, the recital of which formed the chief part of their amusement within doors. The passing of the Scottish Act of Security had given the alarm to England, as it seemed to point at a separation of the two British kingdoms after the decease of Queen Anne, the reigning sovereign. Godolphin, then at the head of the English administration, foresaw that there was no other mode of avoiding the probable extremity of a civil war but by carrying through an incorporating union. How that treaty was managed, and how little it seemed for some time to promise the beneficial results which have since taken place to such extent, may be learned from the history of the period. It is enough for our purpose to say that all Scotland was indignant at the terms on which their legislature had surrendered their national independence. The general resentment led to the strangest leagues and to the wildest plans. The Cameronians were about to take arms for the restoration of the house of Stuart, whom they regarded, with justice, as their oppressors; and the

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intrigues of the period presented the strange picture of Papists, Prelatists, and Presbyterians caballing among themselves against the English government, out of a common feeling that their country had been treated with injustice. The fermentation was universal; and, as the population of Scotland had been generally trained to arms under the Act of Security, they were not indifferently prepared for war, and waited but the declaration of some of the nobility to break out into open hostility. It was at this period of public confusion that our story opens.

The cleugh or wild ravine into which Hobbie Elliot had followed the game was already far behind him, and he was considerably advanced on his return homeward, when the night began to close upon him. This would have been a circumstance of great indifference to the experienced sportsman, who could have walked blindfold over every inch of his native heaths, had it not happened near a spot which, according to the traditions of the country, was in extremely bad fame, as haunted by supernatural appearances. To tales of this kind Hobbie had from his childhood lent an attentive ear, and as no part of the country afforded such a variety of legends, so no man was more deeply read in their fearful lore than Hobbie of the Heughfoot; for so our gallant was called, to distinguish him from a round dozen of Elliots who bore the same Christian name. It cost him no efforts, therefore, to call to memory the terrific incidents connected with the extensive waste upon which he was now entering. In fact, they presented themselves with a readiness which he felt to be somewhat dismaying.

This dreary common was called Mucklestone Moor,

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from a huge column of unhewn granite which raised its massy head on a knoll near the centre of the heath, perhaps to tell of the mighty dead who slept beneath, or to preserve the memory of some bloody skirmish. The real cause of its existence had, however, passed away; and tradition, which is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied its place with a supplementary legend of her own, which now came full upon Hobbie's memory. The ground about the pillar was strewed, or rather encumbered, with many large fragments of stone of the same consistence with the column, which, from their appearance as they lay scattered on the waste, were popularly called the Grey Geese of Mucklestane Moor. The legend accounted for this name and appearance by the catastrophe of a noted and most formidable witch who frequented these hills in former days, causing the ewes to 'keb' and the kine to cast their calves, and performing all the feats of mischief ascribed to these evil beings. On this moor she used to hold her revels with her sister hags; and rings were still pointed out on which no grass nor heath ever grew, the turf being, as it were, calcined by the scorching hoofs of their diabolical partners.

Once upon a time this old hag is said to have crossed the moor, driving before her a flock of geese, which she proposed to sell to advantage at a neighbouring fair; for it is well known that the fiend, however liberal in imparting his powers of doing mischief, ungenerously leaves his allies under the necessity of performing the meanest rustic labours for subsistence. The day was far advanced, and her chance of obtaining a good price depended on her being first at the market. But the geese,

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which had hitherto preceded her in a pretty orderly manner, when they came to this wide common interspersed with marshes and pools of water, scattered in every direction, to plunge into the element in which they delighted. Incensed at the obstinacy with which they defied all her efforts to collect them, and not remembering the precise terms of the contract by which the fiend was bound to obey her commands for a certain space, the sorceress exclaimed, 'Deevil, that neither I nor they ever stir from this spot more!' The words were hardly uttered when, by a metamorphosis as sudden as any in Ovid the hag and her refractory flock were converted into stone, the angel whom she served, being a strict formalist, grasping eagerly at an opportunity of completing the ruin of her body and soul by a literal obedience to her orders. It is said that, when she perceived and felt the transformation which was about to take place, she exclaimed to the treacherous fiend, 'Ah, thou false thief! lang hast thou promised me a grey gown, and now I am getting one that will last for ever.' The dimensions of the pillar and of the stones were often appealed to as a proof of the superior stature and size of old women and geese in the days of other years, by those praisers of the past who held the comfortable opinion of the gradual degeneracy of mankind.

All particulars of this legend Hobbie called to mind as he passed along the moor. He also remembered that, since the catastrophe had taken place, the scene of it had been avoided, at least after nightfall, by all human beings, as being the ordinary resort of kelpies, spunkies, and other demons, once the companions of the witch's diabolical revels, and now continuing to rendezvous upon

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the same spot, as if still in attendance on their transformed mistress. Hobbie's natural hardihood, however, manfully combated with these intrusive sensations of awe. He summoned to his side the brace of large greyhounds who were the companions of his sports, and who were wont, in his own phrase, to fear neither dog nor devil; he looked at the priming of his piece, and, like the clown in 'Hallowe'en' whistled up the warlike ditty of 'Jock of the Side,' as a general causes his drums to beat to inspirit the doubtful courage of his soldiers.

In this state of mind he was very glad to hear a friendly voice shout in his rear, and propose to him a partner on the road. He slackened his pace, and was quickly joined by a youth well known to him, a gentleman of some fortune in that remote country, and who had been abroad on the same errand with himself. Young Earnscliff, 'of that ilk,' had lately come of age and succeeded to a moderate fortune, a good deal dilapidated from the share his family had taken in the disturbances of the period. They were much and generally respected in the country; a reputation which this young gentleman seemed likely to sustain, as he was well educated and of excellent dispositions.

'Now, Earnscliff,' exclaimed Hobbie, 'I am glad to meet your honour ony gate, and company's blythe on a bare moor like this; it's an unco bogilly bit. Where hae ye been sporting?'

'Up the Carla Cleugh, Hobbie,' answered Earnscliff, returning his greeting. 'But will our dogs keep the peace, think you?'

'Deil a fear o' mine,' said Hobbie, 'they hae scarce a leg to stand on. Od! the deer's fled the country, I think!

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I have been as far as Inger Fell foot, and deil a horn has Hobbie seen, excepting three red wud raes, that never let me within shot of them, though I gaed a mile round to get up the wind to them, an' a'. Deil o' me wad care muckle, only I wanted some venison to our auld gude-dame. The carline, she sits in the neuk yonder upbye, and cracks about the grand shooters and hunters lang syne. Od, I think they hae killed a' the deer in the country, for my part.'

'Well, Hobbie, I have shot a fat buck and sent him to Earnscliff this morning; you shall have half of him for your grandmother.'

'Mony thanks to ye, Mr. Patrick; ye're kend to a' the country for a kind heart. It will do the auld wife's heart gude, mair by token when she kens it comes frae you; and maist of a' gin ye'll come up and take your share, for I reckon ye are lonesome now in the auld tower, and a' your folk at that weary Edinburgh. I wonder what they can find to do amang a wheen ranks o' stane houses wi' slate on the tap o' them, that might live on their ain bonny green hills.'

'My education and my sisters' has kept my mother much in Edinburgh for several years,' said Earnscliff, 'but I promise you I propose to make up for lost time.'

'And ye'll rig out the auld tower a bit,' said Hobbie, 'and live hearty and neighbour-like wi' the auld family friends, as the Laird o' Earnscliff should? I can tell ye, my mother — my grandmother, I mean; but, since we lost our ain mother, we ca' her sometimes the tane and sometimes the tother — but, ony gate, she conceits herself no that distant connected wi' you.'

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‘Very true, Hobbie, and I will come to the Heughfoot to dinner to-morrow with all my heart.’

‘Weel, that’s kindly said! We are auld neighbours, an we were nae kin; and my gude-dame’s fain to see you; she clavers about your father that was killed lang syne.’

‘Hush, hush, Hobbie, not a word about that; it’s a story better forgotten.’

‘I dinna ken; if it had chanced amang our folk, we wad hae keepit in mind mony a day till we got some mends for’t; but ye ken your ain ways best, you lairds. I have heard say that Ellieslaw’s friend stickit your sire after the Laird himsell had mastered his sword.’

‘Fie, fie, Hobbie; it was a foolish brawl, occasioned by wine and politics; many swords were drawn, it is impossible to say who struck the blow.’

‘At ony rate, auld Ellieslaw was aiding and abetting; and I am sure if ye were sae disposed as to take amends on him, naebody could say it was wrang, for your father’s blood is beneath his nails; and besides, there’s naebody else left that was concerned to take amends upon, and he’s a Prelatist and a Jacobite into the bargain. I can tell ye the country folk look for something atween ye.’

‘O for shame, Hobbie!’ replied the young Laird; ‘you, that profess religion, to stir your friend up to break the law, and take vengeance at his own hand, and in such a bogilly bit too, where we know not what beings may be listening to us!’

‘Hush, hush!’ said Hobbie, drawing nearer to his companion, ‘I was nae thinking o’ the like o’ them. But I can guess a wee bit what keeps your hand up, Mr. Patrick; we a’ ken it’s no lack o’ courage, but the twa

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grey een of a bonny lass, Miss Isabel Vere, that keeps you sae sober.'

'I assure you, Hobbie,' said his companion, rather angrily — 'I assure you, you are mistaken; and it is extremely wrong of you either to think of or to utter such an idea. I have no idea of permitting freedoms to be carried so far as to connect my name with that of any young lady.'

'Why, there now — there now!' retorted Elliot; 'did I not say it was nae want o' spunk that made ye sae mim? Weel, weel, I meant nae offence; but there's just ae thing ye may notice frae a friend. The auld Laird of Ellieslaw has the auld riding blood far hetter at his heart than ye hae: troth, he kens naething about thae newfangled notions o' peace and quietness; he's a' for the auld-world doings o' lifting and laying on, and he has a wheen stout lads at his back too, and keeps them weel up in heart, and as fu' o' mischief as young colts. Where he gets the gear to do't, nane can say; he lives high, and far abune his rents here; however, he pays his way. Sae, if there's any outbreak in the country, he's likely to break out wi' the first. And weel does he mind the auld quarrels between ye. I'm surmising he'll be for a touch at the auld tower at Earnscliff.'

'Well, Hobbie,' answered the young gentleman, 'if he should be so ill advised, I shall try to make the old tower good against him, as it has been made good by my betters against his betters many a day ago.'

'Very right — very right; that's speaking like a man now,' said the stout yeoman; 'and, if sae should be that this be sae, if ye'll just gar your servant jow out the great bell in the tower, there's me and my twa brothers and

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little Davie of the Stenhouse will be wi' you, wi' a' the power we can make, in the snapping of a flint.'

'Many thanks, Hobbie,' answered Earnscliff; 'but I hope we shall have no war of so unnatural and unchristian a kind in our time.'

'Hout, sir, hout,' replied Elliot; 'it wad be but a wee bit neighbour war, and Heaven and earth would make allowances for it in this uncultivated place. It's just the nature o' the folk and the land: we canna live quiet like London folk, we haena sae muckle to do. It's impossible.'

'Well, Hobbie,' said the Laird, 'for one who believes so deeply as you do in supernatural appearances, I must own you take Heaven in your own hand rather audaciously, considering where we are walking.'

'What needs I care for the Mucklestane Moor ony mair than ye do yoursell, Earnscliff?' said Hobbie, something offended; 'to be sure, they do say there's a sort o' worricows and lang-nebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them? I hae a good conscience, and little to answer for, unless it be about a rant amang the lasses or a splore at a fair, and that's no muckle to speak of. Though I say it mysell, I am as quiet a lad and as peaceable —'

'And Dick Turnbull's head that you broke, and Willie of Winton whom you shot at?' said his travelling companion.

'Hout, Earnscliff, ye keep a record of a' men's misdoings. Dick's head's healed again, and we're to fight out the quarrel at Jeddart on the Rood-day, so that's like a thing settled in a peaceable way; and then I am friends wi' Willie again, puir chield, it was but twa or three hail-draps after a'. I wad let ony body do the like

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o't to me for a pint o' brandy. But Willie's Lowland bred, poor fallow, and soon frightened for himsell. And for the worricows, were we to meet ane on this very bit —'

'As is not unlikely,' said young Earnscliff, 'for there stands your old witch, Hobbie.'

'I say,' continued Elliot, as if indignant at this hint —
'I say, if the auld carline hersell was to get up out o' the grund just before us here, I would think nae mair —
But, Gude preserve us, Earnscliff, what can yon be!'

CHAPTER III

Brown Dwarf, that o'er the moorland strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!
'The Brown Man of the Moor, that stays
Beneath the heather-bell.

JOHN LEYDEN.

THE object which alarmed the young farmer in the middle of his valorous protestations startled for a moment even his less prejudiced companion. The moon, which had arisen during their conversation, was, in the phrase of that country, wading or struggling with clouds, and shed only a doubtful and occasional light. By one of her beams, which streamed upon the great granite column to which they now approached, they discovered a form, apparently human, but of a size much less than ordinary, which moved slowly among the large grey stones, not like a person intending to journey onward, but with the slow, irregular, flitting movement of a being who hovers around some spot of melancholy recollection, uttering also, from time to time, a sort of indistinct muttering sound. This so much resembled his idea of the motions of an apparition, that Hobbie Elliot, making a dead pause, while his hair erected itself upon his scalp, whispered to his companion, 'It's auld Ailie hersell! Shall I gie her a shot, in the name of God?'

'For Heaven's sake, no,' said his companion, holding down the weapon which he was about to raise to the aim — 'for Heaven's sake, no; it's some poor distracted creature.'

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‘Ye’re distracted yoursell, for thinking of going so near to her,’ said Elliot, holding his companion in his turn, as he prepared to advance. ‘We’ll aye hae time to pit ower a bit prayer — an I could but mind ane — afore she comes this length. God! she’s in nae hurry,’ continued he, growing bolder from his companion’s confidence, and the little notice the apparition seemed to take of them. ‘She hirples like a hen on a het girdle. I redd ye, Earnscliff (this he added in a gentle whisper), let us take a cast about, as if to draw the wind on a buck. The bog is no abune knee-deep, and better a saft road as bad company.’

Earnscliff, however, in spite of his companion’s resistance and remonstrances, continued to advance on the path they had originally pursued, and soon confronted the object of their investigation.

The height of the figure, which appeared even to decrease as they approached it, seemed to be under four feet, and its form, as far as the imperfect light afforded them the means of discerning, was very nearly as broad as long, or rather of a spherical shape, which could only be occasioned by some strange personal deformity. The young sportsman hailed this extraordinary appearance twice, without receiving any answer, or attending to the pinches by which his companion endeavoured to intimate that their best course was to walk on, without giving farther disturbance to a being of such singular and preternatural exterior. To the third repeated demand of ‘Who are you? What do you here at this hour of night?’ a voice replied, whose shrill, uncouth, and dissonant tones made Elliot step two paces back, and startled even his companion, ‘Pass on your way, and ask nought at them that ask nought at you.’

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‘What do you do here, so far from shelter? Are you benighted on your journey? Will you follow us home (‘God forbid!’ ejaculated Hobbie Elliot, involuntarily), and I will give you a lodging?’

‘I would sooner lodge by mysell in the deepest of the Tarras flow,’ again whispered Hobbie.

‘Pass on your way,’ rejoined the figure, the harsh tones of his voice still more exalted by passion. ‘I want not your guidance, I want not your lodging; it is five years since my head was under a human roof, and I trust it was for the last time.’

‘He is mad,’ said Earnscliff.

‘He has a look of auld Humphrey Ettercap, the tinkler, that perished in this very moss about five years syne,’ answered his superstitious companion; ‘but Humphrey wasna that awfu’ big in the bouk.’

‘Pass on your way,’ reiterated the object of their curiosity; ‘the breath of your human bodies poisons the air around me, the sound of your human voices goes through my ears like sharp bodkins.’

‘Lord safe us!’ whispered Hobbie, ‘that the dead should bear sic fearfu’ ill-will to the living! His saul maun be in a puir way, I’m jealous.’

‘Come, my friend,’ said Earnscliff, ‘you seem to suffer under some strong affliction; common humanity will not allow us to leave you here.’

‘Common humanity!’ exclaimed the being, with a scornful laugh that sounded like a shriek, ‘where got ye that catch-word — that noose for woodcocks — that common disguise for man-traps — that bait which the wretched idiot who swallows will soon find covers a hook with barbs ten times sharper than those

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you lay for the animals which you murder for your luxury!’

‘I tell you, my friend,’ again replied Earnscliff, ‘you are incapable of judging of your own situation; you will perish in this wilderness, and we must, in compassion, force you along with us.’

‘I’ll hae neither hand nor foot in ’t,’ said Hobbie; ‘let the ghaist take his ain way, for God’s sake!’

‘My blood be on my own head, if I perish here,’ said the figure; and, observing Earnscliff meditating to lay hold on him, he added, ‘And your blood be upon yours, if you touch but the skirt of my garments, to infect me with the taint of mortality!’

The moon shone more brightly as he spoke thus, and Earnscliff observed that he held out his right hand armed with some weapon of offence, which glittered in the cold ray like the blade of a long knife or the barrel of a pistol. It would have been madness to persevere in his attempt upon a being thus armed, and holding such desperate language, especially as it was plain he would have little aid from his companion, who had fairly left him to settle matters with the apparition as he could, and had proceeded a few paces on his way homeward. Earnscliff, therefore, turned and followed Hobbie, after looking back towards the supposed maniac, who, as if raised to frenzy by the interview, roamed wildly around the great stone, exhausting his voice in shrieks and imprecations, that thrilled wildly along the waste heath.

The two sportsmen moved on some time in silence, until they were out of hearing of these uncouth sounds, which was not ere they had gained a considerable distance from the pillar that gave name to the moor. Each

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made his private comments on the scene they had witnessed, until Hobbie Elliot suddenly exclaimed, 'Weel, I'll uphaud that yon ghaist, if it be a ghaist, has baith done and suffered muckle evil in the flesh, that gars him rampauge in that way after he is dead and gane.'

'It seems to me the very madness of misanthropy,' said Earnscliff, following his own current of thought.

'And ye didna think it was a spiritual creature, then?' asked Hobbie at his companion.

'Who, I? No, surely.'

'Weel, I am partly of the mind myself that it may be a live thing; and yet I dinna ken, I wadna wish to see ony thing look liker a bogle.'

'At any rate,' said Earnscliff, 'I will ride over to-morrow, and see what has become of the unhappy being.'

'In fair daylight?' queried the yeoman; 'then, grace o' God, I 'se be wi' ye. But here we are nearer to Heughfoot than to your house by twa mile; hadna ye better e'en gae hame wi' me, and we'll send the callant on the powny to tell them that you are wi' us, though I believe there 's naebody at hame to wait for you but the servants and the cat.'

'Have with you then, friend Hobbie,' said the young hunter; 'and, as I would not willingly have either the servants be anxious or puss forfeit her supper in my absence, I'll be obliged to you to send the boy as you propose.'

'Aweel, that *is* kind, I must say. And ye'll gae hame to Heughfoot? They'll be right blythe to see you, that will they.'

This affair settled, they walked briskly on a little farther, when, coming to the ridge of a pretty steep hill,

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Hobbie Elliot exclaimed, 'Now, Earnscliff, I am aye glad when I come to this very bit. Ye see the light below? that 's in the ha' window, where grannie, the gash auld carline, is sitting birling at her wheel. And ye see yon other light that 's gaun whiddin' back and forrit through amang the windows? that 's my cousin, Grace Armstrong. She 's twice as clever about the house as my sisters, and sae they say themsells, for they're good-natured lasses as ever trode on heather; but they confess themsells, and sae does grannie, that she has far maist action, and is the best goer about the toun, now that grannie is off the foot hersell. My brothers, ane o' them 's away to wait upon the chamberlain, and ane 's at Moss Phadraig, that 's our led farm; he can see after the stock just as weel as I can do.'

'You are lucky, my good friend, in having so many valuable relations.'

'Troth am I. Grace mak me thankful, I 'se never deny it. But will ye tell me now, Earnscliff, you that have been at college and the High School of Edinburgh, and got a' sort o' lair where it was to be best gotten — will ye tell me, no that it 's ony concern of mine in particular; but I heard the priest of St. John's and our minister bargaining about it at the Winter Fair, and troth they baith spak very weel. Now, the priest says it 's unlawful to marry ane's cousin; but I cannot say I thought he brought out the Gospel authorities half sae weel as our minister; our minister is thought the best divine and the best preacher atween this and Edinburgh. Dinna ye think he was likely to be right?'

'Certainly marriage, by all Protestant Christians, is held to be as free as God made it by the Levitical law;

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so, Hobbie, there can be no bar, legal or religious, betwixt you and Miss Armstrong.'

'Hout awa' wi' your joking, Earnscliff,' replied his companion; 'ye are angry eneugh yoursell if ane touches you a bit, man, on the sooth side of the jest. No that I was asking the question about Grace, for ye maun ken she's no my cousin-germain out and out, but the daughter of my uncle's wife by her first marriage; so she's nae kith nor kin to me, only a connexion like. But now we're at the sheeling hill. I'll fire off my gun to let them ken I'm coming, that's aye my way; and if I hae a deer I gie them twa shots, ane for the deer and ane for mysell.'

He fired off his piece accordingly, and a number of lights were seen to traverse the house, and even to gleam before it. Hobbie Elliot pointed out one of these to Earnscliff, which seemed to glide from the house towards some of the out-houses. 'That's Grace hersell,' said Hobbie. 'She'll no meet me at the door, I'se warrant her; but she'll be awa', for a' that, to see if my hounds' supper be ready, poor beasts.'

'Love me, love my dog,' answered Earnscliff. 'Ah, Hobbie, you are a lucky young fellow!'

This observation was uttered with something like a sigh, which apparently did not escape the ear of his companion.

'Hout, other folk may be as lucky as I am. O how I have seen Miss Isabel Vere's head turn after somebody when they passed ane another at the Carlisle races! Wha kens but things may come round in this world?'

Earnscliff muttered something like an answer; but whether in assent to the proposition or rebuking the application of it could not easily be discovered; and it

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seems probable that the speaker himself was willing his meaning should rest in doubt and obscurity. They had now descended the broad loaning, which, winding round the foot of the steep bank or heugh, brought them in front of the thatched but comfortable farmhouse which was the dwelling of Hobbie Elliot and his family.

The doorway was thronged with joyful faces; but the appearance of a stranger blunted many a gibe which had been prepared on Hobbie's lack of success in the deer-stalking. There was a little bustle among three handsome young women, each endeavouring to devolve upon another the task of ushering the stranger into the apartment, while probably all were anxious to escape for the purpose of making some little personal arrangements, before presenting themselves to a young gentleman in a dishabille only intended for their brother.

Hobbie, in the meanwhile, bestowing some hearty and general abuse upon them all (for Grace was not of the party), snatched the candle from the hand of one of the rustic coquettes as she stood playing pretty with it in her hand, and ushered his guest into the family parlour, or rather hall; for the place having been a house of defence in former times, the sitting apartment was a vaulted and paved room, damp and dismal enough compared with the lodgings of the yeomanry of our days, but which, when well lighted up with a large sparkling fire of turf and bog-wood, seemed to Earnscliff a most comfortable exchange for the darkness and bleak blast of the hill. Kindly and repeatedly was he welcomed by the venerable old dame, the mistress of the family, who, dressed in her coif and pinnars, her close and decent gown of homespun wool, but with a large gold necklace and ear-rings,

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looked what she really was, the lady as well as the farmer's wife, while, seated in her chair of wicker by the corner of the great chimney, she directed the evening occupations of the young women, and of two or three stout serving wenches, who sate plying their distaffs behind the backs of their young mistresses.

As soon as Earnscliff had been duly welcomed, and hasty orders issued for some addition to the evening meal, his grand-dame and sisters opened their battery upon Hobbie Elliot for his lack of success against the deer.

'Jenny needna have kept up her kitchen fire for a' that Hobbie has brought hame,' said one sister.

'Troth no, lass,' said another; 'the gathering peat, if it was weel blawn, wad dress a' our Hobbie's venison.'

'Ay, or the low of the candle, if the wind wad let it bide steady,' said a third. 'If I were him I would bring hame a black crow rather than come back three times without a buck's horn to blaw on.'

Hobbie turned from the one to the other, regarding them alternately with a frown on his brow, the augury of which was confuted by the good-humoured laugh on the lower part of his countenance. He then strove to propitiate them by mentioning the intended present of his companion.

'In my young days,' said the old lady, 'a man wad hae been ashamed to come back frae the hill without a buck hanging on each side o' his horse, like a cadger carrying calves.'

'I wish they had left some for us then, grannie,' retorted Hobbie; 'they 've cleared the country o' them, thae auld friends o' yours, I'm thinking.'

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‘Ye see other folk can find game though you cannot, Hobbie,’ said the eldest sister, glancing a look at young Earnscliff.

‘Weel, weel, woman, hasna every dog his day? begging Earnscliff’s pardon for the auld saying. Mayna I hae his luck and he mine another time? It’s a braw thing for a man to be out a’ day, and frighted — na, I winna say that neither — but mistrysted wi’ bogles in the hame-coming, an’ then to hae to flyte wi’ a wheen women that hae been doing naething a’ the livelang day but whirling a bit stick wi’ a thread trailing at it, or boring at a clout.’

‘Frighted wi’ bogles!’ exclaimed the females, one and all; for great was the regard then paid, and perhaps still paid, in these glens to all such fantasies.

‘I did not say frighted, now; I only said mis-set wi’ the thing. And there was but ae bogle, neither. Earnscliff, ye saw it as weel as I did?’

And he proceeded, without very much exaggeration, to detail in his own way the meeting they had with the mysterious being at Mucklestane Moor, concluding, he could not conjecture what on earth it could be, ‘unless it was either the Enemy himsell or some of the auld Peghts that held the country lang syne.’

‘Auld Peght!’ exclaimed the grand-dame; ‘na, na. Bless thee frae scathe, my bairn, it’s been nae Peght that; it’s been the Brown Man of the Moors! O weary fa’ thae evil days! what can evil beings be coming for to distract a poor country, now it’s peacefully settled and living in love and law? O weary on him! he ne’er brought gude to these lands or the indwellers. My father aften tauld me he was seen in the year o’ the bloody fight at Marston Moor, and then again in Montrose’s troubles,

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and again before the rout o' Dunbar; and, in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwell Brig; and they said the second-sighted Laird of Benarbuck had a communing wi' him some time afore Argyle's landing, but that I cannot speak to sae preceesely, it was far in the west. O, bairns, he's never permitted but in an ill time, sae mind ilka ane o' ye to draw to Him that can help in the day of trouble.'

Earnscliff now interposed, and expressed his firm conviction that the person they had seen was some poor maniac, and had no commission from the invisible world to announce either war or evil. But his opinion found a very cold audience, and all joined to deprecate his purpose of returning to the spot the next day.

'O, my bonny bairn,' said the old dame, for, in the kindness of her heart, she extended her parental style to all in whom she was interested, 'you should beware mair than other folk. There's been a heavy breach made in your house wi' your father's bloodshed, and wi' law pleas and losses sinsyne; and you are the flower of the flock, and the lad that will build up the auld bigging again — if it be His will — to be an honour to the country and a safeguard to those that dwell in it. You, before others, are called upon to put yoursell in no rash adventures; for yours was aye ower-venturesome a race, and muckle harm they have got by it.'

'But I am sure, my good friend, you would not have me be afraid of going to an open moor in broad daylight?'

'I dinna ken,' said the good old dame; 'I wad never bid son or friend o' mine haud their hand back in a gude cause, whether it were a friend's or their ain; that should

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be by nae bidding of mine, or of ony body that's come of a gentle kindred. But it winna gang out of a grey head like mine that to gang to seek for evil that's no fashing wi' you is clean against law and Scripture.'

Earnscliff resigned an argument which he saw no prospect of maintaining with good effect, and the entrance of supper broke off the conversation. Miss Grace had by this time made her appearance, and Hobbie, not without a conscious glance at Earnscliff, placed himself by her side. Mirth and lively conversation, in which the old lady of the house took the good-humoured share which so well becomes old age, restored to the cheeks of the damsels the roses which their brother's tale of the apparition had chased away, and they danced and sung for an hour after supper as if there were no such things as goblins in the world.

CHAPTER IV

I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind;
For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
That I might love thee something.

Timon of Athens.

ON the following morning, after breakfast, Earnscliff took leave of his hospitable friends, promising to return in time to partake of the venison, which had arrived from his house. Hobbie, who apparently took leave of him at the door of his habitation, slunk out, however, and joined him at the top of the hill.

‘Ye’ll be gaun yonder, Mr. Patrick; fient o’ me will mistryst you for a’ my mother says. I thought it best to slip out quietly though, in case she should mislippen something of what we’re gaun to do; we maunna vex her at nae rate, it was amaist the last word my father said to me on his death-bed.’

‘By no means, Hobbie,’ said Earnscliff; ‘she well merits all your attention.’

‘Troth, for that matter, she would be as sair vexed amaist for you as for me. But d’ ye really think there’s nae presumption in venturing back yonder? We hae nae special commission, ye ken.’

‘If I thought as you do, Hobbie,’ said the young gentleman, ‘I would not perhaps inquire farther into this business; but, as I am of opinion that preternatural visitations are either ceased altogether or become very rare in our days, I am unwilling to leave a matter uninvestigated which may concern the life of a poor distracted being.’

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‘Aweel, aweel, if ye really think that,’ answered Hobbie, doubtfully. ‘And it’s for certain the very fairies — I mean the very good neighbours themselfs, for they say folk suldna ca’ them fairies — that used to be seen on every green knowe at e’en, are no half sae often visible in our days. I canna depone to having ever seen ane mysell, but I ance heard ane whistle ahint me in the moss, as like a whaup as ae thing could be like anither. And mony ane my father saw when he used to come hame frae the fairs at e’en, wi’ a drap drink in his head, honest man.’

Earnscliff was somewhat entertained with the gradual declension of superstition from one generation to another which was inferred in this last observation; and they continued to reason on such subjects until they came in sight of the upright stone which gave name to the moor.

‘As I shall answer,’ says Hobbie, ‘yonder’s the creature creeping about yet! But it’s daylight, and you have your gun, and I brought out my bit whinger; I think we may venture on him.’

‘By all manner of means,’ said Earnscliff; ‘but, in the name of wonder, what can he be doing there?’

‘Bigging a dry-stane dike, I think, wi’ the grey geese, as they ca’ thae great loose stanes. Od, that passes a’ thing I e’er heard tell of!’

As they approached nearer, Earnscliff could not help agreeing with his companion. The figure they had seen the night before seemed slowly and toilsomely labouring to pile the large stones one upon another, as if to form a small inclosure. Materials lay around him in great plenty, but the labour of carrying on the work was im-

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mense, from the size of most of the stones; and it seemed astonishing that he should have succeeded in moving several which he had already arranged for the foundation of his edifice. He was struggling to move a fragment of great size when the two young men came up, and was so intent upon executing his purpose that he did not perceive them till they were close upon him. In straining and heaving at the stone, in order to place it according to his wish, he displayed a degree of strength which seemed utterly inconsistent with his size and apparent deformity. Indeed, to judge from the difficulties he had already surmounted, he must have been of Herculean powers; for some of the stones he had succeeded in raising apparently required two men's strength to have moved them. Hobbie's suspicions began to revive on seeing the preternatural strength he exerted.

'I am amaist persuaded it's the ghaist of a stane-mason; see siccan band-stanes as he's laid! An it be a man after a', I wonder what he wad take by the rood to build a march dike. There's ane sair wanted between Cringlehope and the Shaws. Honest man (raising his voice), ye make good firm wark there?'

The being whom he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and, getting up from his stooping posture, stood before them in all his native and hideous deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small, dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets, that rolled with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity. The rest of his features were of the coarse, rough-hewn stamp with which a painter would equip a

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giant in romance; to which was added the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression, so often seen in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and, where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf, so ill did the length of his arms and the iron strength of his frame correspond with the shortness of his stature. His clothing was a sort of coarse brown tunic, like a monk's frock, girt round him with a belt of sealskin. On his head he had a cap made of badger's skin or some other rough fur, which added considerably to the grotesque effect of his whole appearance, and overshadowed features whose habitual expression seemed that of sullen malignant misanthropy.

This remarkable dwarf gazed on the two youths in silence, with a dogged and irritated look, until Earnscliff, willing to soothe him into better temper, observed, 'You are hard tasked, my friend; allow us to assist you.'

Elliot and he accordingly placed the stone, by their joint efforts, upon the rising wall. The Dwarf watched them with the eye of a taskmaster, and testified by peevish gestures his impatience at the time which they took in adjusting the stone. He pointed to another, they raised it also; to a third, to a fourth. They continued to

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humour him, though with some trouble, for he assigned them, as if intentionally, the heaviest fragments which lay near.

‘And now, friend,’ said Elliot, as the unreasonable Dwarf indicated another stone larger than any they had moved, ‘Earnscliff may do as he likes; but be ye man or be ye waur, deil be in my fingers if I break my back wi’ heaving thae stanes ony langer like a barrow-man, without getting sae muckle as thanks for my pains.’

‘Thanks!’ exclaimed the Dwarf, with a motion expressive of the utmost contempt. ‘There, take them and fatten upon them! Take them, and may they thrive with you as they have done with me, as they have done with every mortal worm that ever heard the word spoken by his fellow reptile! Hence; either labour or begone!’

‘This is a fine reward we have, Earnscliff, for building a tabernacle for the devil, and prejudicing our ain souls into the bargain, for what we ken.’

‘Our presence,’ answered Earnscliff, ‘seems only to irritate his frenzy; we had better leave him and send some one to provide him with food and necessaries.’

They did so. The servant despatched for this purpose found the Dwarf still labouring at his wall, but could not extract a word from him. The lad, infected with the superstitions of the country, did not long persist in an attempt to intrude questions or advice on so singular a figure, but, having placed the articles, which he had brought for his use on a stone at some distance, he left them at the misanthrope’s disposal.

The Dwarf proceeded in his labours day after day with an assiduity so incredible as to appear almost supernatural. In one day he often seemed to have done the

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work of two men, and his building soon assumed the appearance of the walls of a hut, which, though very small, and constructed only of stones and turf, without any mortar, exhibited, from the unusual size of the stones employed, an appearance of solidity very uncommon for a cottage of such narrow dimensions and rude construction. Earnscliff, attentive to his motions, no sooner perceived to what they tended than he sent down a number of spars of wood suitable for forming the roof, which he caused to be left in the neighbourhood of the spot, resolving next day to send workmen to put them up. But his purpose was anticipated, for in the evening, during the night, and early in the morning the Dwarf had laboured so hard, and with such ingenuity, that he had nearly completed the adjustment of the rafters. His next labour was to cut rushes and thatch his dwelling, a task which he performed with singular dexterity.

As he seemed averse to receive any aid beyond the occasional assistance of a passenger, materials suitable to his purpose and tools were supplied to him, in the use of which he proved to be skilful. He constructed the door and window of his cot, he adjusted a rude bedstead and a few shelves, and appeared to become somewhat soothed in his temper as his accommodations increased.

His next task was to form a strong inclosure and to cultivate the land within it to the best of his power; until, by transporting mould and working up what was upon the spot, he formed a patch of garden-ground. It must be naturally supposed that, as above hinted, this solitary being received assistance occasionally from such travellers as crossed the moor by chance, as well as from several who went from curiosity to visit his works. It

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was, indeed, impossible to see a human creature, so unfitted, at first sight, for hard labour, toiling with such unremitting assiduity, without stopping a few minutes to aid him in his task; and, as no one of his occasional assistants was acquainted with the degree of help which the Dwarf had received from others, the celerity of his progress lost none of its marvels in their eyes. The strong and compact appearance of the cottage, formed in so very short a space, and by such a being, and the superior skill which he displayed in mechanics and in other arts, gave suspicion to the surrounding neighbours. They insisted that, if he was not a phantom — an opinion which was now abandoned, since he plainly appeared a being of blood and bone with themselves — yet he must be in close league with the invisible world, and have chosen that sequestered spot to carry on his communication with them undisturbed. They insisted, though in a different sense from the philosopher's application of the phrase, that he was never less alone than when alone; and that from the heights which commanded the moor at a distance passengers often discovered a person at work along with this dweller of the desert, who regularly disappeared as soon as they approached closer to the cottage. Such a figure was also occasionally seen sitting beside him at the door, walking with him in the moor, or assisting him in fetching water from his fountain. Earnscliff explained this phenomenon by supposing it to be the Dwarf's shadow.

'Deil a shadow has he,' replied Hobbie Elliot, who was a strenuous defender of the general opinion; 'he's ower far in wi' the Auld Ane to have a shadow. Besides,' he argued more logically, 'wha ever heard of a shadow

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that cam between a body and the sun? and this thing, be it what it will, is thinner and taller than the body himself, and has been seen to come between him and the sun mair than anes or twice either.'

These suspicions, which, in any other part of the country, might have been attended with investigations a little inconvenient to the supposed wizard, were here only productive of respect and awe. The recluse being seemed somewhat gratified by the marks of timid veneration with which an occasional passenger approached his dwelling, the look of startled surprise with which he surveyed his person and his premises, and the hurried step with which he pressed his retreat as he passed the awful spot. The boldest only stopped to gratify their curiosity by a hasty glance at the walls of his cottage and garden, and to apologise for it by a courteous salutation, which the inmate sometimes deigned to return by a word or a nod. Earnscliff often passed that way, and seldom without inquiring after the solitary inmate, who seemed now to have arranged his establishment for life.

It was impossible to engage him in any conversation on his own personal affairs; nor was he communicative or accessible in talking on any other subject whatever, although he seemed to have considerably relented in the extreme ferocity of his misanthropy, or rather to be less frequently visited with the fits of derangement of which this was a symptom. No argument could prevail upon him to accept anything beyond the simplest necessities, although much more was offered by Earnscliff out of charity, and by his more superstitious neighbours from other motives. The benefits of these last he

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repaid by advice, when consulted, as at length he slowly was, on their diseases or those of their cattle. He often furnished them with medicines also, and seemed possessed, not only of such as were the produce of the country, but of foreign drugs. He gave these persons to understand that his name was Elshender the Recluse; but his popular epithet soon came to be Canny Elshie, or the Wise Wight of Mucklestane Moor. Some extended their queries beyond their bodily complaints, and requested advice upon other matters, which he delivered with an oracular shrewdness that greatly confirmed the opinion of his possessing preternatural skill. The querists usually left some offering upon a stone, at a distance from his dwelling; if it was money, or any article which it did not suit him to accept, he either threw it away or suffered it to remain where it was without making use of it. On all occasions his manners were rude and unsocial, and his words in number just sufficient to express his meaning as briefly as possible, and he shunned all communication that went a syllable beyond the matter in hand. When winter had passed away and his garden began to afford him herbs and vegetables, he confined himself almost entirely to those articles of food. He accepted, notwithstanding, a pair of she-goats from Earnscliff, which fed on the moor and supplied him with milk.

When Earnscliff found his gift had been received, he soon afterwards paid the hermit a visit. The old man was seated on a broad flat stone near his garden door, which was the seat of science he usually occupied when disposed to receive his patients or clients. The inside of his hut and that of his garden he kept as sacred from human intrusion as the natives of Otaheite do their

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Morai; apparently he would have deemed it polluted by the step of any human being. When he shut himself up in his habitation no entreaty could prevail upon him to make himself visible, or to give audience to any one whomsoever.

Earnscliff had been fishing in a small river at some distance. He had his rod in his hand, and his basket, filled with trout, at his shoulder. He sate down upon a stone nearly opposite to the Dwarf, who, familiarised with his presence, took no farther notice of him than by elevating his huge misshapen head for the purpose of staring at him, and then again sinking it upon his bosom, as if in profound meditation. Earnscliff looked around him, and observed that the hermit had increased his accommodations by the construction of a shed for the reception of his goats.

‘You labour hard, Elshie,’ he said, willing to lead this singular being into conversation.

‘Labour,’ reëchoed the Dwarf, ‘is the mildest evil of a lot so miserable as that of mankind; better to labour like me than sport like you.’

‘I cannot defend the humanity of our ordinary rural sports, Elshie, and yet —’

‘And yet,’ interrupted the Dwarf, ‘they are better than your ordinary business: better to exercise idle and wanton cruelty on mute fishes than on your fellow-creatures. Yet why should I say so? Why should not the whole human herd butt, gore, and gorge upon each other till all are extirpated but one huge and over-fed Behemoth, and he, when he had throttled and gnawed the bones of all his fellows — he, when his prey failed him, to be roaring whole days for lack of food, and, fin-

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ally, to die inch by inch of famine; it were a consummation worthy of the race!’

‘Your deeds are better, Elshie, than your words,’ answered Earnscliff: ‘you labour to preserve the race whom your misanthropy slanders.’

‘I do; but why? Hearken. You are one on whom I look with the least loathing, and I care not if, contrary to my wont, I waste a few words in compassion to your infatuated blindness. If I cannot send disease into families and murrain among the herds, can I attain the same end so well as by prolonging the lives of those who can serve the purpose of destruction as effectually? If Alice of Bower had died in winter, would young Ruthwin have been slain for her love the last spring? Who thought of penning their cattle beneath the tower when the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was deemed to be on his deathbed? My draughts, my skill, recovered him. And, now, who dare leave his herd upon the lea without a watch, or go to bed without unchaining the sleuth-hound?’

‘I own,’ answered Earnscliff, ‘you did little good to society by the last of these cures. But, to balance the evil, there is my friend Hobbie — honest Hobbie of the Heughfoot; your skill relieved him last winter in a fever that might have lost him his life.’

‘Thus think the children of clay in their ignorance,’ said the Dwarf, smiling maliciously, ‘and thus they speak in their folly. Have you marked the young cub of a wild cat that has been domesticated, how sportive, how playful, how gentle! But trust him with your game, your lambs, your poultry, his inbred ferocity breaks forth; he gripes, tears, ravages, and devours.’

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'Such is the animal's instinct,' answered Earnscliff; 'but what has that to do with Hobbie?'

'It is his emblem, it is his picture,' retorted the Recluse. 'He is at present tame, quiet, and domesticated, for lack of opportunity to exercise his inborn propensities; but let the trumpet of war sound, let the young bloodhound snuff blood, he will be as ferocious as the wildest of his Border ancestors that ever fired a helpless peasant's abode. Can you deny that even at present he often urges you to take bloody revenge for an injury received when you were a boy?' Earnscliff started. The Recluse appeared not to observe his surprise, and proceeded, 'The trumpet *will* blow, the young bloodhound *will* lap blood, and I will laugh and say, "For this I have preserved thee!"' He paused, and continued — 'Such are my cures, their object, their purpose, perpetuating the mass of misery, and playing even in this desert my part in the general tragedy. Were *you* on your sickbed I might, in compassion, send you a cup of poison.'

'I am much obliged to you, Elshie, and certainly shall not fail to consult you, with so comfortable a hope from your assistance.'

'Do not flatter yourself too far,' replied the Hermit, 'with the hope that I will positively yield to the frailty of pity. Why should I snatch a dupe so well fitted to endure the miseries of life as you are from the wretchedness which his own visions and the villainy of the world are preparing for him? Why should I play the compassionate Indian, and, knocking out the brains of the captive with my tomahawk, at once spoil the three days' amusement of my kindred tribe, at the very moment

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when the brands were lighted, the pincers heated, the cauldrons boiling, the knives sharpened, to tear, scorch, seethe, and scarify the intended victim?’

‘A dreadful picture you present to me of life, Elshie; but I am not daunted by it,’ returned Earnscliff. ‘We are sent here, in one sense, to bear and to suffer; but in another, to do and to enjoy. The active day has its evening of repose; even patient sufferance has its alleviations, where there is a consolatory sense of duty discharged.’

‘I spurn at the slavish and bestial doctrine,’ said the Dwarf, his eyes kindling with insane fury. ‘I spurn at it as worthy only of the beasts that perish; but I will waste no more words with you.’

He rose hastily; but, ere he withdrew into the hut, he added with great vehemence, ‘Yet, lest you still think my apparent benefits to mankind flow from the stupid and servile source called love of our fellow-creatures, know that, were there a man who had annihilated my soul’s dearest hope, who had torn my heart to maments, and seared my brain till it glowed like a volcano, and were that man’s fortune and life in my power as completely as this frail potsherd (he snatched up an earthen cup which stood beside him), I would not dash him into atoms thus (he flung the vessel with fury against the wall). No! (he spoke more composedly, but with the utmost bitterness), I would pamper him with wealth and power to inflame his evil passions and to fulfil his evil designs; he should lack no means of vice and villainy; he should be the centre of a whirlpool that itself should know neither rest nor peace, but boil with unceasing fury, while it wrecked every goodly ship that

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approached its limits; he should be an earthquake capable of shaking the very land in which he dwelt, and rendering all its inhabitants friendless, outcast, and miserable — as I am!’

The wretched being rushed into his hut as he uttered these last words, shutting the door with furious violence, and rapidly drawing two bolts, one after another, as if to exclude the intrusion of any one of that hated race who had thus lashed his soul to frenzy. Earnscliff left the moor with mingled sensations of pity and horror, pondering what strange and melancholy cause could have reduced to so miserable a state of mind a man whose language argued him to be of rank and education much superior to the vulgar. He was also surprised to see how much particular information a person who had lived in that country so short a time, and in so recluse a manner, had been able to collect respecting the dispositions and private affairs of the inhabitants.

‘It is no wonder,’ he said to himself, ‘that, with such extent of information, such a mode of life, so uncouth a figure, and sentiments so virulently misanthropic, this unfortunate should be regarded by the vulgar as in league with the Enemy of Mankind.’

CHAPTER V

The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath
Feels, in its barrenness, some touch of spring;
And, in the April dew, or beam of May,
Its moss and lichen freshen and revive;
And thus the heart, most sear'd to human pleasure,
Melts at the tear, joys in the smile, of woman.

BEAUMONT.

As the season advanced the weather became more genial, and the Recluse was more frequently found occupying the broad flat stone in the front of his mansion. As he sate there one day, about the hour of noon, a party of gentlemen and ladies, well mounted and numerously attended, swept across the heath at some distance from his dwelling. Dogs, hawks, and led-horses swelled the retinue, and the air resounded at intervals with the cheer of the hunters and the sound of horns blown by the attendants. The Recluse was about to retire into his mansion at the sight of a train so joyous, when three young ladies, with their attendants, who had made a circuit and detached themselves from their party in order to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the Wise Wight of Mucklestane Moor, came suddenly up ere he could effect his purpose. The first shrieked and put her hands before her eyes at sight of an object so unusually deformed. The second, with a hysterical giggle, which she intended should disguise her terrors, asked the Recluse whether he could tell their fortune. The third, who was best mounted, best dressed, and incomparably the best-looking of the

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three, advanced, as if to cover the incivility of her companions.

‘We have lost the right path that leads through these morasses, and our party have gone forward without us,’ said the young lady. ‘Seeing you, father, at the door of your house, we have turned this way to —’

‘Hush!’ interrupted the Dwarf; ‘so young and already so artful! You came — you know you came, to exult in the consciousness of your own youth, wealth, and beauty, by contrasting them with age, poverty, and deformity. It is a fit employment for the daughter of your father; but oh, how unlike the child of your mother!’

‘Did you, then, know my parents, and do you know me?’

‘Yes; this is the first time you have crossed my waking eyes, but I have seen you in my dreams.’

‘Your dreams?’

‘Ay, Isabel Vere. What hast thou or thine to do with my waking thoughts?’

‘Your waking thoughts, sir,’ said the second of Miss Vere’s companions, with a sort of mock gravity, ‘are fixed doubtless, upon wisdom; folly can only intrude on your sleeping moments.’

‘Over thine,’ retorted the Dwarf, more splenetically than became a philosopher or hermit, ‘folly exercises an unlimited empire, asleep or awake.’

‘Lord bless us!’ said the lady, ‘he’s a prophet, sure enough.’

‘As surely,’ continued the Recluse, ‘as thou art a woman. A woman! I should have said a lady — a fine lady. You asked me to tell your fortune: it is a simple

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one — an endless chase through life after follies not worth catching, and, when caught, successively thrown away — a chase pursued from the days of tottering infancy to those of old age upon his crutches. Toys and merry-makings in childhood, love and its absurdities in youth, spadille and basto in age, shall succeed each other as objects of pursuit — flowers and butterflies in spring, butterflies and thistle-down in summer, withered leaves in autumn and winter — all pursued, all caught, all flung aside. Stand apart; your fortune is said.'

'All *caught*, however,' retorted the laughing fair one, who was a cousin of Miss Vere's; 'that's something, Nancy,' she continued, turning to the timid damsel who had first approached the Dwarf. 'Will you ask your fortune?'

'Not for worlds,' said she, drawing back; 'I have heard enough of yours.'

'Well, then,' said Miss Ilderton, offering money to the Dwarf, 'I'll pay for mine, as if it were spoken by an oracle to a princess.'

'Truth,' said the Soothsayer, 'can neither be bought nor sold'; and he pushed back her proffered offering with morose disdain.

'Well, then,' said the lady, 'I'll keep my money, Mr. Elshender, to assist me in the chase I am to pursue.'

'You will need it,' replied the cynic; 'without it, few pursue successfully, and fewer are themselves pursued. Stop!' he said to Miss Vere, as her companions moved off, 'with you I have more to say. You have what your companions would wish to have, or be thought to have — beauty, wealth, station, accomplishments.'

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‘Forgive my following my companions, father; I am proof both to flattery and fortune-telling.’

‘Stay,’ continued the Dwarf, with his hand on her horse’s rein, ‘I am no common soothsayer and I am no flatterer. All the advantages I have detailed, all and each of them have their corresponding evils — unsuccessful love, crossed affections, the gloom of a convent, or an odious alliance. I, who wish ill to all mankind, cannot wish more evil to you, so much is your course of life crossed by it.’

‘And if it be, father, let me enjoy the readiest solace of adversity while prosperity is in my power. You are old; you are poor, your habitation is far from human aid, were you ill or in want; your situation in many respects exposes you to the suspicions of the vulgar, which are too apt to break out into actions of brutality. Let me think I have mended the lot of one human being! Accept of such assistance as I have power to offer; do this for my sake, if not for your own, that, when these evils arise which you prophesy perhaps too truly, I may not have to reflect that the hours of my happier time have been passed altogether in vain.’

The old man answered with a broken voice, and almost without addressing himself to the young lady: ‘Yes, ’tis thus thou shouldst think, ’tis thus thou shouldst speak, if ever human speech and thought kept touch with each other! They do not — they do not. Alas! they cannot. And yet — wait here an instant, stir not till my return.’ He went to his little garden, and returned with a half-blown rose. ‘Thou hast made me shed a tear, the first which has wet my eyelids for many a year; for that good deed receive this token of gratitude.

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It is but a common rose; preserve it, however, and do not part with it. Come to me in your hour of adversity. Show me that rose, or but one leaf of it, were it withered as my heart is; if it should be in my fiercest and wildest movements of rage against a hateful world, still it will recall gentler thoughts to my bosom, and perhaps afford happier prospects to thine. But no message,' he exclaimed, rising into his usual mood of misanthropy — 'no message — no go-between! Come thyself; and the heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. And now pass on.'

He let go the bridle-rein, and the young lady rode on, after expressing her thanks to this singular being as well as her surprise at the extraordinary nature of his address would permit, often turning back to look at the Dwarf, who still remained at the door of his habitation, and watched her progress over the moor towards her father's castle of Ellieslaw, until the brow of the hill hid the party from his sight.

The ladies, meantime, jested with Miss Vere on the strange interview they had just had with the far-famed Wizard of the Moor. 'Isabella has all the luck at home and abroad! Her hawk strikes down the blackcock; her eyes wound the gallant; no chance for her poor companions and kinswomen; even the conjuror cannot escape the force of her charms. You should, in compassion, cease to be such an engrosser, my dear Isabel, or at least set up shop and sell off all the goods you do not mean to keep for your own use.'

'You shall have them all,' replied Miss Vere, 'and the conjuror to boot, at a very easy rate.'

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‘No! Nancy shall have the conjuror,’ said Miss Ilderton, ‘to supply deficiencies ; she’s not quite a witch herself, you know.’

‘Lord, sister,’ answered the younger Miss Ilderton, ‘what could I do with so frightful a monster? I kept my eyes shut after once glancing at him; and I protest I thought I saw him still, though I winked as close as ever I could.’

‘That’s a pity,’ said her sister; ‘ever while you live, Nancy, choose an admirer whose faults can be hid by winking at them. Well, then, I must take him myself, I suppose, and put him in mamma’s Japan cabinet, in order to show that Scotland can produce a specimen of mortal clay moulded into a form ten thousand times uglier than the imaginations of Canton and Peking, fertile as they are in monsters, have immortalised in porcelain.’

‘There is something,’ said Miss Vere, ‘so melancholy in the situation of this poor man that I cannot enter into your mirth, Lucy, so readily as usual. If he has no resources, how is he to exist in this waste country, living, as he does, at such a distance from mankind? and if he has the means of securing occasional assistance, will not the very suspicion that he is possessed of them expose him to plunder and assassination by some of our unsettled neighbours?’

‘But you forget that they say he is a warlock,’ said Nancy Ilderton.

‘And, if his magic diabolical should fail him,’ rejoined her sister, ‘I would have him trust to his magic natural, and thrust his enormous head and most preternatural visage out at his door or window, full in view of the

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assailants. The boldest robber that ever rode would hardly bide a second glance of him. Well, I wish I had the use of that Gorgon head of his for only one half-hour.'

'For what purpose, Lucy?' said Miss Vere.

'O! I would frighten out of the castle that dark, stiff, and stately Sir Frederick Langley, that is so great a favourite with your father, and so little a favourite of yours. I protest I shall be obliged to the Wizard as long as I live, if it were only for the half-hour's relief from that man's company which we have gained by deviating from the party to visit Elshie.'

'What would you say, then,' said Miss Vere, in a low tone, so as not to be heard by the younger sister, who rode before them, the narrow path not admitting of their moving all three abreast — 'what would you say, my dearest Lucy, if it were proposed to you to endure his company for life?'

'Say? I would say, "No, no, no," three times, each louder than another, till they should hear me at Carlisle.'

'And Sir Frederick would say then, "Nineteen nay-says are half a grant."'

'That,' replied Miss Lucy, 'depends entirely on the manner in which the nay-says are said. Mine should have not one grain of concession in them, I promise you.'

'But if your father,' said Miss Vere, 'were to say, "Thus do, or —"'

'I would stand to the consequences of his "or," were he the most cruel father that ever was recorded in romance, to fill up the alternative.'

'And what if he threatened you with a Catholic aunt, an abbess, and a cloister?'

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‘Then,’ said Miss Ilderton, ‘I would threaten him with a Protestant son-in-law, and be glad of an opportunity to disobey him for conscience sake. And now that Nancy is out of hearing, let me really say, I think you would be excusable before God and man for resisting this preposterous match by every means in your power. A proud, dark, ambitious man, a caballer against the state, infamous for his avarice and severity, a bad son, a bad brother, unkind and ungenerous to all his relatives. Isabel, I would die rather than have him.’

‘Don’t let my father hear you give me such advice,’ said Miss Vere, ‘or adieu, my dear Lucy, to Ellieslaw Castle.’

‘And adieu to Ellieslaw Castle, with all my heart,’ said her friend, ‘if I once saw you fairly out of it, and settled under some kinder protector than he whom nature has given you. O, if my poor father had been in his former health, how gladly would he have received and sheltered you till this ridiculous and cruel persecution were blown over!’

‘Would to God it had been so, my dear Lucy!’ answered Isabella; ‘but I fear that, in your father’s weak state of health, he would be altogether unable to protect me against the means which would be immediately used for reclaiming the poor fugitive.’

‘I fear so indeed,’ replied Miss Ilderton; ‘but we will consider and devise something. Now that your father and his guests seem so deeply engaged in some mysterious plot, to judge from the passing and returning of messages, from the strange faces which appear and disappear without being announced by their names, from the collecting and cleaning of arms, and the anxious gloom

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and bustle which seem to agitate every male in the castle, it may not be impossible for us — always in case matters be driven to extremity — to shape out some little supplemental conspiracy of our own. I hope the gentlemen have not kept all the policy to themselves; and there is one associate that I would gladly admit to our counsel.'

'Not Nancy?'

'O no!' said Miss Ilderton. 'Nancy, though an excellent good girl, and fondly attached to you, would make a dull conspirator — as dull as Renault and all the other subordinate plotters in "Venice Preserved." No; this is a Jaffeir, or Pierre, if you like the character better; and yet, though I know I shall please you, I am afraid to mention his name to you, lest I vex you at the same time. Can you not guess? Something about an eagle and a rock; it does not begin with eagle in English, but something very like it in Scotch.'

'You cannot mean young Earnscliff, Lucy?' said Miss Vere, blushing deeply.

'And whom else should I mean?' said Lucy. 'Jaffeirs and Pierres are very scarce in this country, I take it, though one could find Renaults and Bedamars enow.'

'How can you talk so wildly, Lucy? Your plays and romances have positively turned your brain. You know that, independent of my father's consent, without which I never will marry any one, and which, in the case you point at, would never be granted; independent, too, of our knowing nothing of young Earnscliff's inclinations, but by your own wild conjectures and fancies — besides all this, there is the fatal brawl!'

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‘When his father was killed?’ said Lucy. ‘But that was very long ago; and I hope we have outlived the time of bloody feud, when a quarrel was carried down between two families from father to son, like a Spanish game at chess, and a murder or two, committed in every generation, just to keep the matter from going to sleep. We do with our quarrels nowadays as with our clothes — cut them out for ourselves, and wear them out in our own day, and should no more think of resenting our father’s feuds than of wearing their slashed doublets and trunk-hose.’

‘You treat this far too lightly, Lucy,’ answered Miss Vere.

‘Not a bit, my dear Isabella,’ said Lucy. ‘Consider, your father, though present in the unhappy affray, is never supposed to have struck the fatal blow; besides, in former times, in case of mutual slaughter between clans, subsequent alliances were so far from being excluded, that the hand of a daughter or a sister was the most frequent gage of reconciliation. You laugh at my skill in romance; but, I assure you, should your history be written, like that of many a less distressed and less deserving heroine, the well-judging reader would set you down for the lady and the love of Earnscliff from the very obstacle which you suppose so insurmountable.’

‘But these are not the days of romance but of sad reality, for there stands the castle of Ellieslaw.’

‘And there stands Sir Frederick Langley at the gate, waiting to assist the ladies from their palfreys. I would as lief touch a toad; I will disappoint him and take old Horsington the groom for my master of the horse.’

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So saying, the lively young lady switched her palfrey forward, and, passing Sir Frederick with a familiar nod as he stood ready to take her horse's rein, she cantered on and jumped into the arms of the old groom. Fain would Isabella have done the same had she dared; but her father stood near, displeasure already darkening on a countenance peculiarly qualified to express the harsher passions, and she was compelled to receive the unwelcome assiduities of her detested suitor.

CHAPTER VI

Let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's booty; let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon.

Henry IV, Part I.

THE Solitary had consumed the remainder of that day in which he had the interview with the young ladies within the precincts of his garden. Evening again found him seated on his favourite stone. The sun setting red, and among seas of rolling clouds, threw a gloomy lustre over the moor, and gave a deeper purple to the broad outline of heathy mountains which surrounded this desolate spot. The Dwarf sate watching the clouds as they lowered above each other in masses of conglomerated vapours, and, as a strong lurid beam of the sinking luminary darted full on his solitary and uncouth figure, he might well have seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the earth by the subterranean signals of its approach. As he sate thus, with his dark eye turned towards the scowling and blackening heaven, a horseman rode rapidly up to him, and stopping, as if to let his horse breathe for an instant, made a sort of obeisance to the anchoret, with an air betwixt effrontery and embarrassment.

The figure of the rider was thin, tall, and slender, but remarkably athletic, bony, and sinewy; like one who had all his life followed those violent exercises which prevent the human form from increasing in bulk, while they

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harden and confirm by habit its muscular powers. His face, sharp-featured, sunburnt, and freckled, had a sinister expression of violence, impudence, and cunning, each of which seemed alternately to predominate over the others. Sandy-coloured hair and reddish eyebrows, from under which looked forth his sharp grey eyes, completed the inauspicious outline of the horseman's physiognomy. He had pistols in his holsters, and another pair peeped from his belt, though he had taken some pains to conceal them by buttoning his doublet. He wore a rusted steel head-piece, a buff jacket of rather an antique cast, gloves, of which that for the right hand was covered with small scales of iron, like an ancient gauntlet; and a long broadsword completed his equipage.

'So,' said the Dwarf, 'rapine and murder once more on horseback.'

'On horseback?' said the bandit; 'ay, ay, Elshie, your leechcraft has set me on the bonny bay again.'

'And all those promises of amendment which you made during your illness forgotten?' continued Elshender.

'All clear away, with the water-saps and panada,' returned the unabashed convalescent. 'Ye ken, Elshie, for they say ye are weel acquaint wi' the gentleman,

When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,
When the devil was well, the devil a monk was he.'

'Thou say'st true,' said the Solitary; 'as well divide a wolf from his appetite for carnage, or a raven from her scent of slaughter, as thee from thy accursed propensities.'

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‘Why, what would you have me to do? It’s born with me, lies in my very bluid and bane. Why, man, the lads of Westburnflat for ten lang decents have been reivers and lifters. They have all drunk hard, lived high, taking deep revenge for light offence, and never wanted gear for the winning.’

‘Right; and thou art as thoroughbred a wolf,’ said the Dwarf, ‘as ever leapt a lamb-fold at night. On what hell’s errand art thou bound now?’

‘Can your skill not guess?’

‘Thus far I know,’ said the Dwarf, ‘that thy purpose is bad, thy deed will be worse, and the issue worst of all.’

‘And you like me the better for it, Father Elshie, eh?’ said Westburnflat; ‘you always said you did.’

‘I have cause to like all,’ answered the Solitary, ‘that are scourges to their fellow-creatures, and thou art a bloody one.’

‘No, I say not guilty to that; never bluidy unless there’s resistance, and that sets a man’s bristles up, ye ken. And this is nae great matter, after a’; just to cut the comb of a young cock that has been crawling a little ower crouselly.’

‘Not young Earnscliff?’ said the Solitary, with some emotion.

‘No; not young Earnscliff — not young Earnscliff yet; but his time may come, if he will not take warning and get him back to the burrow-town that he’s fit for, and no keep skelping about here, destroying the few deer that are left in the country, and pretending to act as a magistrate, and writing letters to the great folk at Auld Reekie about the disturbed state of the land. Let him take care o’ himsell.’

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‘Then it must be Hobbie of the Heughfoot,’ said Elshie. ‘What harm has the lad done you?’

‘Harm! nae great harm; but I hear he says I staid away from the ba’spiel on Fastern’s E’en for fear of him; and it was only for fear of the country keeper, for there was a warrant against me. I’ll stand Hobbie’s feud and a’ his clan’s. But it’s not so much for that as to gie him a lesson not to let his tongue gallop ower freely about his betters. I trow he will hae lost the best pen-feather o’ his wing before to-morrow morning. Farewell, Elshie; there’s some canny boys waiting for me down amang the shaws owerby; I will see you as I come back, and bring ye a blythe tale in return for your leechcraft.’

Ere the Dwarf could collect himself to reply, the Reiver of Westburnflat set spurs to his horse. The animal, starting at one of the stones which lay scattered about, flew from the path. The rider exercised his spurs without moderation or mercy. The horse became furious, reared, kicked, plunged, and bolted like a deer, with all his four feet off the ground at once. It was in vain: the unrelenting rider sate as if he had been a part of the horse which he bestrode; and, after a short but furious contest, compelled the subdued animal to proceed upon the path at a rate which soon carried him out of sight of the Solitary.

‘That villain,’ exclaimed the Dwarf — ‘that cool-blooded, hardened, unrelenting ruffian — that wretch, whose every thought is infected with crimes — has thewes and sinews, limbs, strength, and activity enough, to compel a nobler animal than himself to carry him to the place where he is to perpetrate his wickedness; while

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I, had I the weakness to wish to put his wretched victim on his guard, and to save the helpless family, would see my good intentions frustrated by the decrepitude which chains me to the spot. Why should I wish it were otherwise? What have my screech-owl voice, my hideous form, and my misshapen features to do with the fairer workmanship of nature? Do not men receive even my benefits with shrinking horror and ill-suppressed disgust? And why should I interest myself in a race which accounts me a prodigy and an outcast, and which has treated me as such? No; by all the ingratitude which I have reaped, by all the wrongs which I have sustained, by my imprisonment, my stripes, my chains, I will wrestle down my feelings of rebellious humanity! I will not be the fool I have been, to swerve from my principles whenever there was an appeal, forsooth, to my feelings; as if I, towards whom none show sympathy, ought to have sympathy with any one. Let Destiny drive forth her scythed car through the overwhelmed and trembling mass of humanity! Shall I be the idiot to throw this decrepit form, this misshapen lump of mortality, under her wheels, that the Dwarf, the Wizard, the Hunchback may save from destruction some fair form or some active frame, and all the world clap their hands at the exchange? No, never! And yet this Elliot — this Hobbie, so young and gallant, so frank, so — I will think of it no longer. I cannot aid him if I would, and I am resolved — firmly resolved — that I would not aid him if a wish were the pledge of his safety!’

Having thus ended his soliloquy, he retreated into his hut for shelter from the storm which was fast approaching, and now began to burst in large and heavy drops of

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rain. The last rays of the sun now disappeared entirely, and two or three claps of distant thunder followed each other at brief intervals, echoing and reëchoing among the range of heathy fells like the sound of a distant engagement.

CHAPTER VII

Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn!

.
Return to thy dwelling, all lonely, return ;
For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,
And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood.

CAMPBELL.

THE night continued sullen and stormy; but morning rose as if refreshed by the rains. Even the Mucklestane Moor, with its broad bleak swells of barren grounds, interspersed with marshy pools of water, seemed to smile under the serene influence of the sky, just as good-humour can spread a certain inexpressible charm over the plainest human countenance. The heath was in its thickest and deepest bloom. The bees, which the Solitary had added to his rural establishment, were abroad and on the wing, and filled the air with the murmurs of their industry. As the old man crept out of his little hut his two she-goats came to meet him, and licked his hands in gratitude for the vegetables with which he supplied them from his garden. 'You, at least,' he said — 'you, at least, see no differences in form which can alter your feelings to a benefactor; to you the finest shape that ever statuary moulded would be an object of indifference or of alarm, should it present itself instead of the misshapen trunk to whose services you are accustomed. While I was in the world, did I ever meet with such a return of gratitude? No; the domestic whom I had bred from infancy made mouths at me as he stood behind my

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chair; the friend whom I had supported with my fortune, and for whose sake I had even stained — (he stopped with a strong convulsive shudder). Even he thought me more fit for the society of lunatics, for their disgraceful restraints, for their cruel privations, than for communication with the rest of humanity. Hubert alone — and Hubert too will one day abandon me. All are of a piece — one mass of wickedness, selfishness, and ingratitude — wretches who sin even in their devotions, and of such hardness of heart that they do not, without hypocrisy, even thank the Deity Himself for his warm sun and pure air.'

As he was plunged in these gloomy soliloquies, he heard the tramp of a horse on the other side of his inclosure, and a strong clear bass voice singing with the liveliness inspired by a light heart —

Canny Hobbie Elliot, canny Hobbie now,
Canny Hobbie Elliot, I'se gang alang wi' you.

At the same moment a large deer greyhound sprung over the hermit's fence. It is well known to the sportsmen in these wilds that the appearance and scent of the goat so much resemble those of their usual objects of chase that the best-broke greyhounds will sometimes fly upon them. The dog in question instantly pulled down and throttled one of the hermit's she-goats, while Hobbie Elliot, who came up and jumped from his horse for the purpose, was unable to extricate the harmless animal from the fangs of his attendant until it was expiring. The Dwarf eyed, for a few moments, the convulsive starts of his dying favourite, until the poor goat stretched out her limbs with the twitches and shivering fit of the

last agony. He then started into an access of frenzy, and unsheathing a long sharp knife or dagger which he wore under his coat, he was about to launch it at the dog, when Hobbie, perceiving his purpose, interposed, and caught hold of his hand, exclaiming, 'Let a be the hound, man — let a be the hound! Na, na, Killbuck maunna be guided that gate, neither.'

The Dwarf turned his rage on the young farmer; and by a sudden effort, far more powerful than Hobbie expected from such a person, freed his wrist from his grasp and offered the dagger at his heart. All this was done in the twinkling of an eye, and the incensed Recluse might have completed his vengeance by plunging the weapon in Elliot's bosom, had he not been checked by an internal impulse which made him hurl the knife to a distance.

'No,' he exclaimed, as he thus voluntarily deprived himself of the means of gratifying his rage; 'not again — not again!'

Hobbie retreated a step or two in great surprise, discomposure, and disdain at having been placed in such danger by an object apparently so contemptible.

'The deil's in the body for strength and bitterness!' were the first words that escaped him, which he followed up with an apology for the accident that had given rise to their disagreement. 'I am no justifying Killbuck a'thegither neither, and I am sure it is as vexing to me as to you, Elshie, that the mischance should hae happened; but I'll send you twa goats and twa fat gimmers, man, to make a' straight again. A wise man like you shouldna bear malice against a poor dumb thing; ye see that a goat's like first-cousin to a deer, sae he

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acted but according to his nature after a'. Had it been a pet lamb there wad hae been mair to be said. Ye suld keep sheep, Elshie, and no goats, where there's sae mony deer-hounds about; but I'll send ye baith.'

'Wretch!' said the Hermit, 'your cruelty has destroyed one of the only creatures in existence that would look on me with kindness!'

'Dear Elshie,' answered Hobbie, 'I'm wae ye suld hae cause to say sae; I'm sure it wasna wi' my will. And yet, it's true, I should hae minded your goats, and coupled up the dogs. I'm sure I would rather they had worried the primest wether in my faulds. Come, man, forget and forgie. I'm e'en as vexed as ye can be. But I am a bridegroom, ye see, and that puts a' things out o' my head, I think. There's the marriage-dinner, or gude part o't, that my twa brithers are bringing on a sled round by the Riders' Slack — three goodly bucks as ever ran on Dal-lomla, as the sang says; they couldna come the straight road for the saft grund. I wad send ye a bit venison, but ye wadna take it weel maybe, for Killbuck caught it.'

During this long speech, in which the good-natured Borderer endeavoured to propitiate the offended Dwarf by every argument he could think of, he heard him with his eyes bent on the ground, as if in the deepest meditation, and at length broke forth: 'Nature! Yes, it is indeed in the usual beaten path of Nature. The strong gripe and throttle the weak; the rich depress and despoil the needy; the happy — those who are idiots enough to think themselves happy — insult the misery and diminish the consolation of the wretched. Go hence, thou who hast contrived to give an additional pang to the most

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miserable of human beings — thou who hast deprived me of what I half considered as a source of comfort. Go hence, and enjoy the happiness prepared for thee at home!’

‘Never stir,’ said Hobbie, ‘if I wadna take you wi’ me, man, if ye wad but say it wad divert ye to be at the bridal on Monday. There will be a hundred strapping Elliots to ride the brouze: the like’s no been seen sin’ the days of auld Martin of the Preakin Tower. I wad send the sled for ye wi’ a canny powny.’

‘Is it to me you propose once more to mix in the society of the common herd?’ said the Recluse, with an air of deep disgust.

‘Commons!’ retorted Hobbie, ‘nae siccan commons neither; the Elliots hae been lang kend a gentle race.’

‘Hence! begone!’ reiterated the Dwarf; ‘may the same evil luck attend thee that thou hast left behind with me! If I go not with you myself, see if you can escape what my attendants, Wrath and Misery, have brought to thy threshold before thee.’

‘I wish ye wadna speak that gate,’ said Hobbie. ‘Ye ken yoursell, Elshie, naebody judges you to be ower canny. Now, I’ll tell ye just ae word for a’: ye hae spoken as muckle as wussing ill to me and mine; now, if ony mischance happen to Grace — which God forbid — or to mysell, or to the poor dumb tyke, or if I be skaithed and injured in body, gudes, or gear, I’ll no forget wha it is that it’s owing to.’

‘Out, hind!’ exclaimed the Dwarf; ‘home! home to your dwelling, and think on me when you find what has befallen there.’

‘Aweel, aweel,’ said Hobbie, mounting his horse, ‘it

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serves naething to strive wi' cripples, they are aye cankered; but I'll just tell ye ae thing, neighbour, that if things be otherwise than weel wi' Grace Armstrong, I'll gie you a scouter if there be a tar-barrel in the five parishes.'

So saying, he rode off; and Elshie, after looking at him with a scornful and indignant laugh, took spade and mattock and occupied himself in digging a grave for his deceased favourite.

A low whistle, and the words, 'Hisht, Elshie, hisht!' disturbed him in this melancholy occupation. He looked up, and the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was before him. Like Banquo's murderer, there was blood on his face, as well as upon the rowels of his spurs and the sides of his over-ridden horse.

'How now, ruffian?' demanded the Dwarf, 'is thy job chared?'

'Ay, ay, doubt not that, Elshie,' answered the freebooter; 'when I ride, my foes may moan. They have had mair light than comfort at the Heughfoot this morning: there's a toom byre and a wide, and a wail and a cry for the bonny bride.'

'The bride?'

'Ay; Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie, as we ca' him — that's Charlie Foster of Tinning Beck, has promised to keep her in Cumberland till the blast blaw by. She saw me and kend me in the splore, for the mask fell frae my face for a blink. I am thinking it wad concern my safety if she were to come back here; for there's mony o' the Elliots, and they band weel thegither for right or wrang. Now, what I chiefly come to ask your rede in, is how to make her sure?'

‘Wouldst thou murder her, then?’

‘Umph! no, no; that I would not do, if I could help it. But they say they can whiles get folk cannily away to the plantations from some of the out-ports, and something to boot for them that brings a bonny wench. They’re wanted beyond seas thae female cattle, and they’re no that scarce here. But I think o’ doing better for this lassie. There’s a leddy that, unless she be a’ the better bairn, is to be sent to foreign parts whether she will or no; now, I think of sending Grace to wait on her; she’s a bonny lassie. Hobbie will hae a merry morning when he comes hame and misses baith bride and gear.’

‘Ay; and do you not pity him?’ said the Recluse.

‘Wad he pity me were I gaeing up the castle hill at Jeddart?¹ And yet I rue something for the bit lassie; but he’ll get anither, and little skaith dune. Ane is as gude as anither. And now, you that like to hear o’ splores, heard ye ever o’ a better ane than I hae had this morning?’

‘Air, ocean, and fire,’ said the Dwarf, speaking to himself, ‘the earthquake, the tempest, the volcano, are all mild and moderate compared to the wrath of man. And what is this fellow but one more skilled than others in executing the end of his existence? Hear me, felon, go again where I before sent thee.’

‘To the steward?’

‘Ay; and tell him Elshender the Recluse commands him to give thee gold. But hear me, let the maiden be discharged free and uninjured; return her to her friends, and let her swear not to discover thy villainy.’

¹ The place of execution at that ancient burgh, where many of West-burnflat’s profession have made their final exit.

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‘Swear!’ said Westburnflat; ‘but what if she break her aith? Women are not famous for keeping their plight. A wise man like you should ken that. And uninjured! Wha kens what may happen were she to be left lang at Tinning Beck? Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie is a rough customer. But, if the gold could be made up to twenty pieces, I think I could ensure her being wi’ her friends within the twenty-four hours.’

The Dwarf took his tablets from his pocket, marked a line on them, and tore out the leaf. ‘There,’ he said, giving the robber the leaf. ‘But, mark me — thou knowest I am not to be fooled by thy treachery — if thou darest to disobey my directions, thy wretched life, be sure, shall answer it.’

‘I know,’ said the fellow, looking down, ‘that you have power on earth, however you came by it: you can do what nae other man can do, baith by physic and foresight; and the gold is shelled down, when ye command, as fast as I have seen the ash-keys fall in a frosty morning in October. I will not disobey you.’

‘Begone, then, and relieve me of thy hateful presence.’

The robber set spurs to his horse and rode off without reply.

Hobbie Elliot had, in the meanwhile, pursued his journey rapidly, harassed by those oppressive and indistinct fears that all was not right which men usually term a presentiment of misfortune. Ere he reached the top of the bank from which he could look down on his own habitation, he was met by his nurse, a person then of great consequence in all families in Scotland, whether of the higher or middling classes. The connexion between them and their foster-children was considered a tie far

too dearly intimate to be broken; and it usually happened, in the course of years, that the nurse became a resident in the family of her foster-son, assisting in the domestic duties, and receiving all marks of attention and regard from the heads of the family. So soon as Hobbie recognised the figure of Annapple, in her red cloak and black hood, he could not help exclaiming to himself, 'What ill-luck can hae brought the auld nurse sae far frae hame, her that never stirs a gun-shot frae the door-stane for ordinar? Hout, it will just be to get crane-berries or whortle-berries, or some such stuff, out of the moss, to make the pies and tarts for the feast on Monday. I cannot get the words of that cankered auld cripple deil's-buckie out o' my head: the least thing makes me dread some ill news. O, Killbuck, man! were there nae deer and goats in the country besides, but ye behoved to gang and worry his creature by a' other folk's?'

By this time Annapple, with a brow like a tragic volume, had hobbled towards him and caught his horse by the bridle. The despair in her look was so evident as to deprive even him of the power of asking the cause. 'O my bairn!' she cried, 'gang na forward — gang na forward; it's a sight to kill ony body, let alane thee.'

'In God's name, what's the matter?' said the astonished horseman, endeavouring to extricate his bridle from the grasp of the old woman; 'for Heaven's sake, let me go and see what's the matter.'

'Ohon! that I should have lived to see the day! The steading's a' in a low, and the bonny stackyard lying in the red ashes, and the gear a' driven away. But gang na forward; it wad break your young heart, hinny, to see what my auld een hae seen this morning.'

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‘And who has dared to do this? Let go my bridle, Annaple. Where is my grandmother, my sisters? Where is Grace Armstrong? God! the words of the warlock are knelling in my ears!’

He sprang from his horse to rid himself of Annaple’s interruption, and, ascending the hill with great speed, soon came in view of the spectacle with which she had threatened him. It was indeed a heart-breaking sight. The habitation which he had left in its seclusion, beside the mountain-stream, surrounded with every evidence of rustic plenty, was now a wasted and blackened ruin. From amongst the shattered and sable walls the smoke continued to rise. The turf-stack, the barn-yard, the offices stocked with cattle, all the wealth of an upland cultivator of the period, of which poor Elliot possessed no common share, had been laid waste or carried off in a single night. He stood a moment motionless, and then exclaimed, ‘I am ruined — ruined to the ground! But curse on the world’s gear — had it not been the week before the bridal! But I am nae babe, to sit down and greet about it. If I can but find Grace and my grandmother and my sisters weel, I can go to the wars in Flanders, as my gude-sire did, under the Bellenden banner, wi’ auld Buccleuch. At ony rate, I will keep up a heart, or they will lose theirs a’thegither.’

Manfully strode Hobbie down the hill, resolved to suppress his own despair and administer consolation which he did not feel. The neighbouring inhabitants of the dell, particularly those of his own name, had already assembled. The younger part were in arms and clamorous for revenge, although they knew not upon whom; the elder were taking measures for the relief of the dis-

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tressed family. Annapple's cottage, which was situated down the brook, at some distance from the scene of mischief, had been hastily adapted for the temporary accommodation of the old lady and her daughters, with such articles as had been contributed by the neighbours, for very little was saved from the wreck.

'Are we to stand here a' day, sirs,' exclaimed one tall young man, 'and look at the burnt wa's of our kinsman's house? Every wreath of the reek is a blast of shame upon us! Let us to horse and take the chase. Who has the nearest bloodhound?'

'It's young Earnscliff,' answered another; 'and he's been on and away wi' six horse lang syne, to see if he can track them.'

'Let us follow him then, and raise the country, and mak mair help as we ride, and then have at the Cumberland reivers! Take, burn, and slay; they that lie nearest us shall smart first.'

'Whisht! haud your tongues, daft callants,' said an old man, 'ye dinna ken what ye speak about. What! wad ye raise war atween twa pacificated countries?'

'And what signifies deaving us wi' tales about our fathers,' retorted the young man, 'if we're to sit and see our friends' houses burnt ower their heads, and no put out hand to revenge them? Our fathers did not do that, I trow?'

'I am no saying ony thing against revenging Hobbie's wrang, puir chield; but we maun take the law wi' us in thae days, Simon,' answered the more prudent elder.

'And besides,' said another old man, 'I dinna believe there's ane now living that kens the lawful mode of fol-

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lowing a fray across the Border. Tam o' Whittram kend a' about it; but he died in the hard winter.'

'Ay,' said a third, 'he was at the great gathering, when they chased as far as Thirlwall; it was the year after the fight of Philiphaugh.'

'Hout,' exclaimed another of these discording counselors, 'there's nae great skill needed; just put a lighted peat on the end of a spear or hay-fork, or sic-like, and blaw a horn, and cry the gathering-word, and then it's lawful to follow gear into England, and recover it by the strong hand, or to take gear frae some other Englishman, providing ye lift nae mair than's been lifted frae you. That's the auld Border law, made at Dundrennan, in the days of the Black Douglas. Deil ane need doubt it. It's as clear as the sun.'

'Come away, then, lads,' cried Simon, 'get to your geldings, and we'll take auld Cuddie the muckle tasker wi' us; he kens the value o' the stock and plenishing that's been lost. Hobbie's stalls and stakes shall be fou again or night; and if we canna big up the auld house sae soon, we'se lay an English ane as low as Heughfoot is; and that's fair play, a' the warld ower.'

This animating proposal was received with great applause by the younger part of the assemblage, when a whisper ran among them, 'There's Hobbie himsell, puir fallow! we'll be guided by him.'

The principal sufferer, having now reached the bottom of the hill, pushed on through the crowd, unable, from the tumultuous state of his feelings, to do more than receive and return the grasps of the friendly hands by which his neighbours and kinsmen mutely expressed their sympathy in his misfortune. While he pressed

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Simon of Hackburn's hand, his anxiety at length found words. 'Thank ye, Simon — thank ye, neighbours; I ken what ye wad a' say. But where are they? Where are —' He stopped, as if afraid even to name the objects of his inquiry; and with a similar feeling his kinsmen, without reply, pointed to the hut, into which Hobbie precipitated himself with the desperate air of one who is resolved to know the worst at once. A general and powerful expression of sympathy accompanied him. 'Ah, puir fallow, puir Hobbie!'

'He'll learn the warst o't now!'

'But I trust Earnscliff will get some speerings o' the puir lassie.'

Such were the exclamations of the group, who, having no acknowledged leader to direct their motions, passively awaited the return of the sufferer, and determined to be guided by his directions.

The meeting between Hobbie and his family was in the highest degree affecting. His sisters threw themselves upon him and almost stifled him with their caresses, as if to prevent his looking round to distinguish the absence of one yet more beloved.

'God help thee, my son! He can help when worldly trust is a broken reed.' Such was the welcome of the matron to her unfortunate grandson. He looked eagerly round, holding two of his sisters by the hand, while the third hung about his neck. 'I see you, I count you — my grandmother, Lillas, Jean, and Annot; but where is —' he hesitated, and then continued, as if with an effort — 'where is Grace? Surely this is not a time to hide hersell frae me; there's nae time for daffing now.'

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‘O, brother!’ and ‘Our poor Grace!’ was the only answer his questions could procure, till his grandmother rose up and gently disengaged him from the weeping girls, led him to a seat, and with the affecting serenity which sincere piety, like oil sprinkled on the waves, can throw over the most acute feelings, she said, ‘My bairn, when thy grandfather was killed in the wars, and left me with six orphans around me, with scarce bread to eat or a roof to cover us, I had strength — not of mine own — but I had strength given me to say, “The Lord’s will be done!” My son, our peaceful house was last night broken into by moss-troopers, armed and masked; they have taken and destroyed all, and carried off our dear Grace. Pray for strength to say, “His will be done!”’

‘Mother! mother! urge me not, I cannot — not now; I am a sinful man, and of a hardened race. Masked — armed — Grace carried off! Gie me my sword and my father’s knapsack; I will have vengeance, if I should go to the pit of darkness to seek it!’

‘O my bairn, my bairn! be patient under the rod. Who knows when He may lift his hand off from us? Young Earnscliff, Heaven bless him! has taen the chase, with Davie of Stenhouse and the first comers. I cried to let house and plenishing burn, and follow the reivers to recover Grace, and Earnscliff and his men were ower the Fell within three hours after the deed. God bless him! he’s a real Earnscliff; he’s his father’s true son, a leal friend.’

‘A true friend indeed, God bless him!’ exclaimed Hobbie; ‘let’s on and away, and take the chase after him.’

‘O, my child, before you run on danger, let me hear you but say, “His will be done!”’

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‘Urge me not, mother — not now.’ He was rushing out, when, looking back, he observed his grandmother make a mute attitude of affliction. He returned hastily, threw himself into her arms, and said, ‘Yes, mother, I *can* say, “His will be done,” since it will comfort you.’

‘May He go forth — may He go forth with you, my dear bairn; and O, may He give you cause to say on your return, “His name be praised”!’

‘Farewell, mother! farewell, my dear sisters!’ exclaimed Elliot, and rushed out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII

Now horse and haddock, cried the Laird —
Now horse and haddock, speedilie;
They that winna ride for Telfer's kye,
Let them never look in the face o' me.

Border Ballad.

'HORSE! horse! and spear!' exclaimed Hobbie to his kinsmen. Many a ready foot was in the stirrup; and, while Elliot hastily collected arms and accoutrements, no easy matter in such a confusion, the glen resounded with the approbation of his younger friends.

'Ay, ay!' exclaimed Simon of Hackburn, 'that's the gate to take it, Hobbie. Let women sit and greet at hame, men must do as they have been done by; it's the Scripture says 't.'

'Haud your tongue, sir,' said one of the seniors, sternly; 'dinna abuse the Word that gate, ye dinna ken what ye speak about.'

'Hae ye ony tidings? Hae ye ony speerings, Hobbie? O, callants, dinna be ower-hasty,' said old Dick of the Dingle.

'What signifies preaching to us, e'enow?' said Simon; 'if ye canna make help yoursell, dinna keep back them that can.'

'Whisht, sir; wad ye take vengeance or ye ken wha has wrang'd ye?'

'D'ye think we dinna ken the road to England as weel as our fathers before us? All evil comes out o' thereaway — it's an auld saying and a true; and we'll e'en away there, as if the devil was blawing us south.'

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'We'll follow the track o' Earnscliff's horses ower the waste,' cried one Elliot.

'I'll prick them out through the blindest moor in the Border, an there had been a fair held there the day before,' said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn, 'for I aye shoe his horse wi' my ain hand.'

'Lay on the deer-hounds,' cried another; 'where are they?'

'Hout, man, the sun's been lang up, and the dew is aff the grund; the scent will never lie.'

Hobbie instantly whistled on his hounds, which were roving about the ruins of their old habitation and filling the air with their doleful howls.

'Now, Killbuck,' said Hobbie, 'try thy skill this day.' And then, as if a light had suddenly broke on him — 'That ill-faur'd goblin spak something o' this! He may ken mair o't, either by villains on earth or devils below; I'll hae it frae him, if I should cut it out o' his misshapen bouk wi' my whinger.' He then hastily gave directions to his comrades: 'Four o' ye, wi' Simon, haud right forward to Græme's Gap. If they're English, they'll be for being back that way. The rest disperse by twasome and threesome through the waste, and meet me at the Trysting Pool. Tell my brothers, when they come up, to follow and meet us there. Poor lads, they will hae hearts weel-nigh as sair as mine; little think they what a sorrowful house they are bringing their venison to! I'll ride ower Mucklestane Moor mysell.'

'And if I were you,' said Dick of the Dingle, 'I would speak to Canny Elshie. He can tell you whatever betides in this land, if he's sae minded.'

'He *shall* tell me,' said Hobbie, who was busy putting

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his arms in order, 'what he kens o' this night's job, or I shall right weel ken wherefore he does not.'

'Ay, but speak him fair, my bonny man, speak him fair, Hobbie; the like o' him will no bear thrawing. They converse sae muckle wi' thae fractious ghaists and evil spirits that it clean spoils their temper.'

'Let me alane to guide him,' answered Hobbie; 'there's that in my breast this day that would owermaister a' the warlocks on earth and a' the devils in hell.'

And, being now fully equipped, he threw himself on his horse and spurred him at a rapid pace against the steep ascent.

Elliot speedily surmounted the hill, rode down the other side at the same rate, crossed a wood, and traversed a long glen, ere he at length regained Muckle-stane Moor. As he was obliged in the course of his journey to relax his speed in consideration of the labour which his horse might still have to undergo, he had time to consider maturely in what manner he should address the Dwarf, in order to extract from him the knowledge which he supposed him to be in possession of concerning the authors of his misfortunes. Hobbie, though blunt, plain of speech, and hot of disposition, like most of his countrymen, was by no means deficient in the shrewdness which is also their characteristic. He reflected, that from what he had observed on the memorable night when the Dwarf was first seen, and from the conduct of that mysterious being ever since, he was likely to be rendered even more obstinate in his sullenness by threats and violence.

'I'll speak him fair,' he said, 'as auld Dickon advised

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me. Though folk say he has a league wi' Satan, he canna be sic an incarnate devil as no to take some pity in a case like mine; and folk threep he'll whiles do good, charitable sort o' things. I'll keep my heart down as weel as I can, and stroke him wi' the hair; and if the warst come to the warst, it's but wringing the head o' him about at last.'

In this disposition of accommodation he approached the hut of the Solitary. The old man was not upon his seat of audience, nor could Hobbie perceive him in his garden or inclosures.

'He's gotten into his very keep,' said Hobbie, 'maybe to be out o' the gate; but I'se pu' it down about his lugs if I canna win at him otherwise.'

Having thus communed with himself, he raised his voice and invoked Elshie in a tone as supplicating as his conflicting feelings would permit. 'Elshie, my gude friend!' No reply. 'Elshie, canny Father Elshie!' The Dwarf remained mute. 'Sorrow be in the crooked carcass of thee!' said the Borderer between his teeth; and then again attempting a soothing tone, 'Good Father Elshie, a most miserable creature desires some counsel of your wisdom.'

'The better!' answered the shrill and discordant voice of the Dwarf through a very small window, resembling an arrow-slit, which he had constructed near the door of his dwelling, and through which he could see any one who approached it, without the possibility of their looking in upon him.

'The better!' said Hobbie, impatiently; 'what is the better, Elshie? Do you not hear me tell you I am the most miserable wretch living?'

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‘And do you not hear me tell you it is so much the better? and did I not tell you this morning, when you thought yourself so happy, what an evening was coming upon you?’

‘That ye did e’en,’ replied Hobbie, ‘and that gars me come to you for advice now; they that foresaw the trouble maun ken the cure.’

‘I know no cure for earthly trouble,’ returned the Dwarf; ‘or, if I did, why should I help others, when none hath aided me? Have I not lost wealth, that would have bought all thy barren hills a hundred times over? rank, to which thine is as that of a peasant? society, where there was an interchange of all that was amiable, of all that was intellectual? Have I not lost all this? Am I not residing here, the veriest outcast on the face of Nature, in the most hideous and most solitary of her retreats, myself more hideous than all that is around me? And why should other worms complain to me when they are trodden on, since I am myself lying crushed and writhing under the chariot-wheel?’

‘Ye may have lost all this,’ answered Hobbie, in the bitterness of emotion; ‘land and friends, goods and gear — ye may hae lost them a’; but ye ne’er can hae sae sair a heart as mine, for ye ne’er lost nae Grace Armstrong. And now my last hopes are gane, and I shall ne’er see her mair.’

This he said in the tone of deepest emotion, and there followed a long pause, for the mention of his bride’s name had overcome the more angry and irritable feelings of poor Hobbie. Ere he had again addressed the Solitary, the bony hand and long fingers of the latter, holding a large leathern bag, was thrust forth at the

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small window, and as it unclutched the burden, and let it drop with a clang upon the ground, his harsh voice again addressed Elliot. 'There — there lies a salve for every human ill; so, at least, each human wretch readily thinks. Begone; return twice as wealthy as thou wert before yesterday, and torment me no more with questions, complaints, or thanks; they are alike odious to me.'

'It is a' gowd, by Heaven!' said Elliot, having glanced at the contents; and then again addressing the Hermit — 'Muckle obliged for your goodwill; and I wad blythely gie you a bond for some o' the siller, or a wadset ower the lands o' Wideopen. But I dinna ken, Elshie; to be free wi' you, I dinna like to use siller unless I kend it was decently come by; and maybe it might turn into slate-stanes and cheat some poor man.'

'Ignorant idiot!' retorted the Dwarf; 'the trash is as genuine poison as ever was dug out of the bowels of the earth. Take it, use it, and may it thrive with you as it hath done with me!'

'But I tell you,' said Elliot, 'it wasna about the gear that I was consulting you: it was a braw barn-yard, doubtless, and thirty head of finer cattle there werena on this side of the Catrail; but let the gear gang. If ye could but gie me speerings o' puir Grace, I would be content to be your slave for life, in ony thing that didna touch my salvation. O, Elshie, speak, man, speak!'

'Well, then,' answered the Dwarf, as if worn out by his importunity, 'since thou hast not enough of woes of thine own, but must needs seek to burden thyself with those of a partner, seek her whom thou hast lost in the *West*.'

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‘In the *West*? That’s a wide word.’

‘It is the last,’ said the Dwarf, ‘which I design to utter’; and he drew the shutters of his window, leaving Hobbie to make the most of the hint he had given.

‘The west! the west!’ thought Elliot; ‘the country is pretty quiet down that way, unless it were Jock o’ the Todholes; and he’s ower auld now for the like o’ thae jobs. West! By my life, it must be Westburnflat. — Elshie, just tell me one word. Am I right? Is it Westburnflat? If I am wrang, say sae. I wadna like to wyte an innocent neighbour wi’ violence. No answer? It must be the Red Reiver. I didna think he wad hae ventured on me, neither, and sae mony kin as there’s o’ us. I am thinking he’ll hae some better backing than his Cumberland friends. Fareweel to you, Elshie, and mony thanks. I downa be fashed wi’ the siller e’en now, for I maun awa’ to meet my friends at the trysting-place. Sae, if ye carena to open the window, ye can fetch it in after I’m awa’.’

Still there was no reply.

‘He’s deaf or he’s daft, or he’s baith; but I hae nae time to stay to claver wi’ him.’

And off rode Hobbie Elliot towards the place of rendezvous which he had named to his friends.

Four or five riders were already gathered at the Trysting Pool. They stood in close consultation together, while their horses were permitted to graze among the poplars which overhung the broad still pool. A more numerous party were seen coming from the southward. It proved to be Earnscliff and his party, who had followed the track of the cattle as far as the English border, but had halted on the information that a considerable

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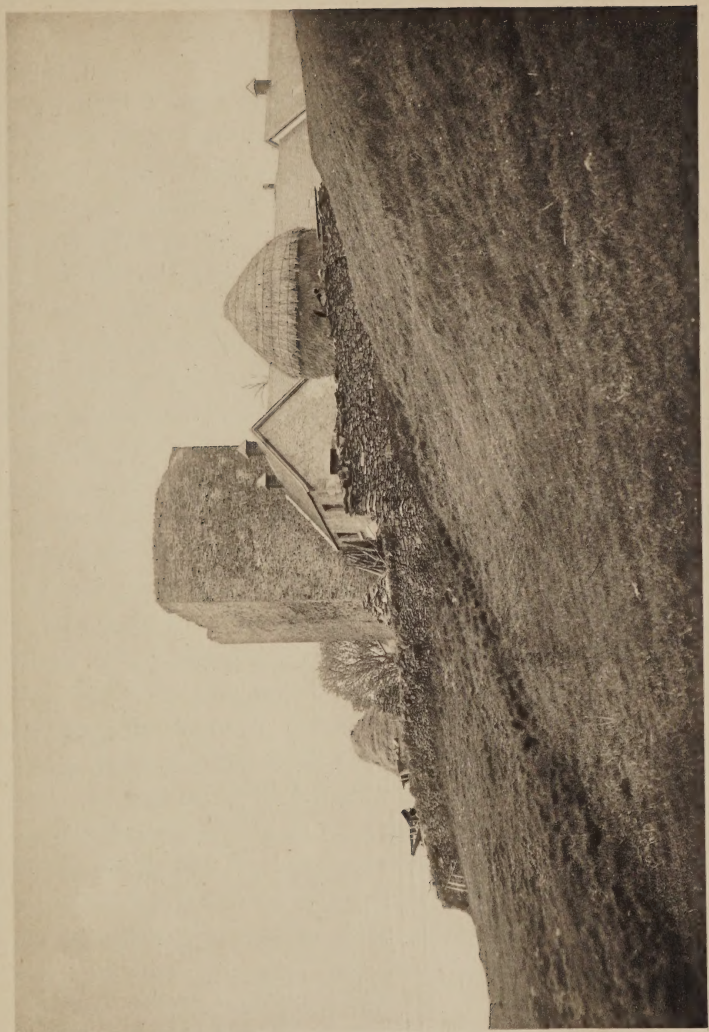
force was drawn together under some of the Jacobite gentlemen in that district, and there were tidings of insurrection in different parts of Scotland. This took away from the act which had been perpetrated the appearance of private animosity or love of plunder; and Earnscliff was now disposed to regard it as a symptom of civil war. The young gentleman greeted Hobbie with the most sincere sympathy, and informed him of the news he had received.

‘Then, may I never stir frae the bit,’ said Elliot, ‘if auld Ellieslaw is not at the bottom o’ the haill villainy! Ye see he’s leagued wi’ the Cumberland Catholics; and that agrees weel wi’ what Elshie hinted about Westburnflat, for Ellieslaw aye protected him, and he will want to harry and disarm the country about his ain hand before he breaks out.’

Some now remembered that the party of ruffians had been heard to say they were acting for James VIII, and were charged to disarm all rebels. Others had heard Westburnflat boast, in drinking parties, that Ellieslaw would soon be in arms for the Jacobite cause, and that he himself was to hold a command under him, and that they would be bad neighbours for young Earnscliff, and all that stood out for the established government. The result was a strong belief that Westburnflat had headed the party under Ellieslaw’s orders; and they resolved to proceed instantly to the house of the former, and, if possible, to secure his person. They were by this time joined by so many of their dispersed friends that their number amounted to upwards of twenty horsemen, well mounted, and tolerably, though variously, armed.

A brook, which issued from a narrow glen among the

Goldielands



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hills, entered, at Westburnflat, upon the open marshy level, which, expanding about half a mile in every direction, gives name to the spot. In this place the character of the stream becomes changed, and, from being a lively brisk-running mountain-torrent, it stagnates, like a blue swollen snake, in dull deep windings through the swampy level. On the side of the stream, and nearly about the centre of the plain, arose the tower of Westburnflat, one of the few remaining strongholds formerly so numerous upon the Borders. The ground upon which it stood was gently elevated above the marsh for the space of about a hundred yards, affording an esplanade of dry turf, which extended itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the tower, but beyond which the surface presented to strangers was that of an impassable and dangerous bog. The owner of the tower and his inmates alone knew the winding and intricate paths, which, leading over the ground that was comparatively sound, admitted visitors to his residence. But among the party which were assembled under Earnscliff's directions there was more than one person qualified to act as guide. For although the owner's character and habits of life were generally known, yet the laxity of feeling with respect to property prevented his being looked on with the abhorrence with which he must have been regarded in a more civilized country. He was considered, among his more peaceable neighbours, pretty much as a gambler, cock-fighter, or horse-jockey would be regarded at the present day; a person, of course, whose habits were to be condemned, and his society, in general, avoided, yet who could not be considered as marked with the indelible infamy attached to his profession where laws have been

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habitually observed. And their indignation was awakened against him upon this occasion, not so much on account of the general nature of the transaction, which was just such as was to be expected from this marauder, as that the violence had been perpetrated upon a neighbour against whom he had no cause of quarrel, against a friend of their own, above all against one of the name of Elliot, to which clan most of them belonged. It was not, therefore, wonderful, that there should be several in the band pretty well acquainted with the locality of his habitation, and capable of giving such directions and guidance as soon placed the whole party on the open space of firm ground in front of the Tower of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER IX

So spak the knicht. The geaunt sed,
Lead forth with the the sely maid,
And mak me quite of the and sche;
For glaunsing ee, or brow so brent,
Or cheek with rose and lilie blent,
Me lists not ficht with the.

Romance of the Falcon.

THE tower, before which the party now stood, was a small square building, of the most gloomy aspect. The walls were of great thickness, and the windows, or slits which served the purpose of windows, seemed rather calculated to afford the defenders the means of employing missile weapons than for admitting air or light to the apartments within. A small battlement projected over the walls on every side, and afforded farther advantage of defence by its niched parapet, within which arose a steep roof flagged with grey stones. A single turret at one angle, defended by a door studded with huge iron nails, rose above the battlement, and gave access to the roof from within, by the spiral staircase which it inclosed. It seemed to the party that their motions were watched by some one concealed within this turret; and they were confirmed in their belief when, through a narrow loophole, a female hand was seen to wave a handkerchief, as if by way of signal to them. Hobbie was almost out of his senses with joy and eagerness.

‘It was Grace’s hand and arm,’ he said; ‘I can swear to it amang a thousand. There is not the like of it on this side of the Lowdens. We’ll have her out, lads, if we

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should carry off the Tower of Westburnflat stane by stane.'

Earnscliff, though he doubted the possibility of recognizing a fair maiden's hand at such a distance from the eye of the lover, would say nothing to damp his friend's animated hopes, and it was resolved to summon the garrison.

The shouts of the party, and the winding of one or two horns, at length brought to a loophole which flanked the entrance the haggard face of an old woman.

'That's the Reiver's mother,' said one of the Elliots; 'she's ten times waur than himsell, and is wyted for muckle of the ill he does about the country.'

'Wha are ye? What d' ye want here?' were the queries of the respectable progenitor.

'We are seeking William Græme of Westburnflat,' said Earnscliff.

'He's no at hame,' returned the old dame.

'When did he leave home?' pursued Earnscliff.

'I canna tell,' said the portress.

'When will he return?' said Hobbie Elliot.

'I dinna ken naething about it,' replied the inexorable guardian of the keep.

'Is there anybody within the tower with you?' again demanded Earnscliff.

'Naebody but mysell and baudrons,' said the old woman.

'Then open the gate and admit us,' said Earnscliff; 'I am a justice of peace, and in search of the evidence of a felony.'

'Deil be in their fingers that draws a bolt for ye,' retorted the portress; 'for mine shall never do it. Thinkna

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ye shame o' yoursells, to come here siccan a band o' ye, wi' your swords and spears and steel-caps, to frighten a lone widow woman?'

'Our information,' said Earnscliff, 'is positive; we are seeking goods which have been forcibly carried off, to a great amount.'

'And a young woman that's been cruelly made prisoner, that's worth mair than a' the gear twice told,' said Hobbie.

'And I warn you,' continued Earnscliff, 'that your only way to prove your son's innocence is to give us quiet admittance to search the house.'

'And what will ye do if I carena to thraw the keys, or draw the bolts, or open the grate to sic a clanjamfrie?' said the old dame, scoffingly.

'Force our way with the king's keys, and break the neck of every living soul we find in the house, if ye dinna gie it ower forthwith!' menaced the incensed Hobbie.

'Threatened folks live lang,' said the hag, in the same tone of irony; 'there's the iron grate, try your skeel on't, lads; it has kept out as gude men as you or now.'

So saying, she laughed, and withdrew from the aperture through which she had held the parley.

The besiegers now opened a serious consultation. The immense thickness of the walls, and the small size of the windows, might for a time have even resisted cannon-shot. The entrance was secured, first, by a strong grated door, composed entirely of hammered iron, of such ponderous strength as seemed calculated to resist any force that could be brought against it. 'Pinches or

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forehammers will never pick upon't,' said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn; 'ye might as weel batter at it wi' pipe-staples.'

Within the doorway, and at the distance of nine feet, which was the solid thickness of the wall, there was a second door of oak, crossed, both breadth and lengthways, with clenched bars of iron, and studded full of broad-headed nails. Besides all these defences, they were by no means confident in the truth of the old dame's assertion that she alone composed the garrison. The more knowing of the party had observed hoof-marks in the track by which they approached the tower, which seemed to indicate that several persons had very lately passed in that direction.

To all these difficulties was added their want of means for attacking the place. There was no hope of procuring ladders long enough to reach the battlements, and the windows, besides being very narrow, were secured with iron bars. Scaling was therefore out of the question; mining was still more so, for want of tools and gunpowder; neither were the besiegers provided with food, means of shelter, or other conveniences, which might have enabled them to convert the siege into a blockade; and there would, at any rate, have been a risk of relief from some of the marauder's comrades. Hobbie grinded and gnashed his teeth, as, walking round the fastness, he could devise no means of making a forcible entry. At length he suddenly exclaimed, 'And what for no do as our fathers did lang syne? Put hand to the wark, lads. Let us cut up bushes and briers, pile them before the door and set fire to them, and smoke that auld devil's dam as if she were to be reested for bacon.'

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All immediately closed with this proposal, and some went to work with swords and knives to cut down the alder and hawthorn bushes which grew by the side of the sluggish stream, many of which were sufficiently decayed and dried for their purpose, while others began to collect them in a large stack, properly disposed for burning, as close to the iron grate as they could be piled. Fire was speedily obtained from one of their guns, and Hobbie was already advancing to the pile with a kindled brand, when the surly face of the robber and the muzzle of a musketoon were partially shown at a shot-hole which flanked the entrance. 'Mony thanks to ye,' he said, scoffingly, 'for collecting sae muckle winter eilding for us; but if ye step a foot nearer it wi' that lunt, it's be the dearest step ye ever made in your days.'

'We'll sune see that,' said Hobbie, advancing fearlessly with the torch.

The marauder snapped his piece at him, which, fortunately for our honest friend, did not go off; while Earnscliff, firing at the same moment at the narrow aperture and slight mark afforded by the robber's face, grazed the side of his head with a bullet. He had apparently calculated upon his post affording him more security, for he no sooner felt the wound, though a very slight one, than he requested a parley, and demanded to know what they meant by attacking in this fashion a peaceable and honest man, and shedding his blood in that lawless manner.

'We want your prisoner,' said Earnscliff, 'to be delivered up to us in safety.'

'And what concern have you with her?' replied the marauder.

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‘That,’ retorted Earnscliff, ‘you, who are detaining her by force have no right to inquire.’

‘Aweel, I think I can gie a guess,’ said the robber. ‘Weel, sirs, I am laith to enter into deadly feud with you by spilling ony of your bluid, though Earnscliff hasna stopped to shed mine, and he can hit a mark to a groat’s breadth; so, as to prevent mair skaith, I am willing to deliver up the prisoner, since nae less will please you.’

‘And Hobbie’s gear?’ cried Simon of Hackburn. ‘D’ye think you’re to be free to plunder the faulds and byres of a gentle Elliot as if they were an auld wife’s hen’s cavey?’

‘As I live by bread,’ replied Willie of Westburnflat — ‘as I live by bread, I have not a single cloot o’ them! They’re a’ ower the marsh lang syne; there’s no a horn o’ them about the tower. But I’ll see what o’ them can be gotten back, and I’ll take this day twa days to meet Hobbie at the Castleton wi’ twa friends on ilka side, and see to make an agreement about a’ the wrang he can wyte me wi.’

‘Ay, ay,’ said Elliot, ‘that will do weel eneugh.’ And then aside to his kinsman, ‘Murrain on the gear! Lord-sake, man! say nought about them. Let us but get puir Grace out o’ that auld hellicat’s clutches.’

‘Will ye gie me your word, Earnscliff,’ said the marauder, who still lingered at the shot-hole, ‘your faith and troth, with hand and glove, that I am free to come and free to gae, with five minutes to open the grate and five minutes to steek it and to draw the bolts? less winna do, for they want creishing sairly. Will ye do this?’

‘You shall have full time,’ said Earnscliff; ‘I plight my faith and troth, my hand and my glove.’

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‘Wait there a moment, then,’ said Westburnflat; ‘or hear ye, I wad rather ye wad fa’ back a pistol-shot from the door. It’s no that I mistrust your word, Earnscliff; but it’s best to be sure.’

‘O, friend,’ thought Hobbie to himself, as he drew back, ‘an I had you but on Turner’s Holm,¹ and nae-body by but twa honest lads to see fair play, I wad make ye wish ye had broken your leg ere ye had touched beast or body that belanged to me!’

‘He has a white feather in his wing, this same Westburnflat, after a’,’ said Simon of Hackburn, somewhat scandalized by his ready surrender. ‘He’ll ne’er fill his father’s boots.’

In the meanwhile, the inner door of the tower was opened, and the mother of the freebooter appeared in the space betwixt that and the outer grate. Willie himself was next seen, leading forth a female, and the old woman, carefully bolting the grate behind them, remained on the post as a sort of sentinel.

‘Ony ane or twa o’ ye come forward,’ said the outlaw, ‘and take her frae my hand hail and sound.’

Hobbie advanced eagerly to meet his betrothed bride. Earnscliff followed more slowly, to guard against treachery. Suddenly Hobbie slackened his pace in the deepest mortification, while that of Earnscliff was hastened by impatient surprise. It was not Grace Armstrong but Miss Isabella Vere whose liberation had been effected by their appearance before the tower.

‘Where is Grace? where is Grace Armstrong?’ exclaimed Hobbie, in the extremity of wrath and indignation.

¹ See Note 3.

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‘Not in my hands,’ answered Westburnflat; ‘ye may search the tower if ye misdoubt me.’

‘You false villain, you shall account for her, or die on the spot,’ said Elliot, presenting his gun.

But his companions, who now came up, instantly disarmed him of his weapon, exclaiming all at once, ‘Hand and glove! faith and troth! Haud a care, Hobbie; we maun keep our faith wi’ Westburnflat, were he the greatest rogue ever rode.’

Thus protected, the outlaw recovered his audacity, which had been somewhat daunted by the menacing gesture of Elliot.

‘I have kept my word, sirs,’ he said, ‘and I look to have nae wrang amang ye. If this is no the prisoner ye sought,’ he said, addressing Earnscliff, ‘ye’ll render her back to me again. I am answerable for her to those that aught her.’

‘For God’s sake, Mr. Earnscliff, protect me!’ said Miss Vere, clinging to her deliverer; ‘do not you abandon one whom the whole world seems to have abandoned.’

‘Fear nothing,’ whispered Earnscliff, ‘I will protect you with my life.’ Then turning to Westburnflat, ‘Villain!’ he said, ‘how dared you to insult this lady?’

‘For that matter, Earnscliff,’ answered the freebooter, ‘I can answer to them that has better right to ask me than you have; but if *you* come with an armed force and take her awa’ from them that her friends lodged her wi’, how will you answer *that*? But it’s your ain affair. Nae single man can keep a tower against twenty. A’ the men o’ the Mearns downa do mair than they dow.’

‘He lies most falsely,’ said Isabella; ‘he carried me off by violence from my father.’

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‘Maybe he only wanted ye to think sae, hinny,’ replied the robber; ‘but it’s nae business o’ mine, let it be as it may. So ye winna resign her back to me?’

‘Back to you, fellow? Surely no,’ answered Earnscliff; ‘I will protect Miss Vere, and escort her safely wherever she is pleased to be conveyed.’

‘Ay, ay, maybe you and her hae settled that already,’ said Willie of Westburnflat.

‘And Grace?’ interrupted Hobbie, shaking himself loose from the friends who had been preaching to him the sanctity of the safe-conduct, upon the faith of which the freebooter had ventured from his tower, ‘where’s Grace?’ and he rushed on the marauder, sword in hand.

Westburnflat, thus pressed, after calling out, ‘Godsake, Hobbie, hear me a gliff!’ fairly turned his back and fled. His mother stood ready to open and shut the grate; but Hobbie struck at the freebooter as he entered with so much force that the sword made a considerable cleft in the lintel of the vaulted door, which is still shown as a memorial of the superior strength of those who lived in the days of yore. Ere Hobbie could repeat the blow, the door was shut and secured, and he was compelled to retreat to his companions, who were now preparing to break up the siege of Westburnflat. They insisted upon his accompanying them in their return.

‘Ye hae broken truce already,’ said old Dick of the Dingle; ‘an we takena the better care, ye’ll play mair gowk’s tricks, and make yoursell the laughing-stock of the haill country, besides having your friends charged with slaughter under trust. Bide till the meeting at Castleton, as ye hae greed; and if he disna make ye amends, then we’ll hae it out o’ his heart’s blood. But let us gang

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reasonably to wark and keep our tryste, and I'se warrant we get back Grace and the kye an' a'.'

This cold-blooded reasoning went ill down with the unfortunate lover; but, as he could only obtain the assistance of his neighbours and kinsmen on their own terms, he was compelled to acquiesce in their notions of good faith and regular procedure.

Earnscliff now requested the assistance of a few of the party to convey Miss Vere to her father's castle of Ellieslaw, to which she was peremptory in desiring to be conducted. This was readily granted, and five or six young men agreed to attend him as an escort. Hobbie was not of the number. Almost heart-broken by the events of the day and his final disappointment, he returned moodily home to take such measures as he could for the sustenance and protection of his family, and to arrange with his neighbours the further steps which should be adopted for the recovery of Grace Armstrong. The rest of the party dispersed in different directions, as soon as they had crossed the morass. The outlaw and his mother watched them from the tower until they entirely disappeared.

CHAPTER X

I left my ladye's bower last night —
It was clad in wreaths of snaw, —
I'll seek it when the sun is bright,
And sweet the roses blaw.

Old Ballad.

INCENSED at what he deemed the coldness of his friends in a cause which interested him so nearly, Hobbie had shaken himself free of their company, and was now on his solitary road homeward. 'The fiend founder thee!' said he, as he spurred impatiently his over-fatigued and stumbling horse; 'thou art like a' the rest o' them. Hae I not bred thee and fed thee and dressed thee wi' mine ain hand, and wouldst thou snapper now and break my neck at my utmost need? But thou'rt e'en like the lave: the farthest off o' them a' is my cousin ten times removed, and day or night I wad hae served them wi' my best blood; and now I think they show mair regard to the common thief of Westburnflat than to their ain kinsman. But I should see the lights now in Heughfoot. Wae's me!' he continued, recollecting himself, 'there will neither coal nor candle-light shine in the Heughfoot ony mair! An it werena for my mother and sisters and poor Grace, I could find in my heart to put spurs to the beast and loup ower the scaur into the water to make an end o't a'.' In this disconsolate mood he turned his horse's bridle towards the cottage in which his family had found refuge.

As he approached the door he heard whispering and

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tittering amongst his sisters. 'The deevil's in the women,' said poor Hobbie; 'they would nicker and laugh and giggle if their best friend was lying a corp; and yet I am glad they can keep up their hearts sae weel, poor silly things; but the dirdum fa's on me, to be sure, and no on them.'

While he thus meditated, he was engaged in fastening up his horse in a shed. 'Thou maun do without horse-sheet and surcingle now, lad,' he said, addressing the animal; 'you and me hae had a downcome alike; we had better hae fa'en in the deepest pool o' Tarras.'

He was interrupted by the youngest of his sisters, who came running out, and, speaking in a constrained voice, as if to stifle some emotion, called out to him, 'What are ye doing there, Hobbie, fiddling about the naig, and there's ane frae Cumberland been waiting here for ye this hour and mair? Haste ye in, man; I'll take off the saddle.'

'Ane frae Cumberland!' exclaimed Elliot; and, putting the bridle of his horse into the hand of his sister, he rushed into the cottage. 'Where is he? where is he?' he exclaimed, glancing eagerly around, and seeing only females. 'Did he bring news of Grace?'

'He doughtna bide an instant langer,' said the elder sister, still with a suppressed laugh.

'Hout fie, bairns!' said the old lady, with something of a good-humoured reproof, 'ye shouldna vex your billie Hobbie that way. Look round, my bairn, and see if there isna ane here mair than ye left this morning.'

Hobbie looked eagerly round. 'There's you and the three titties.'

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‘There’s four of us now, Hobbie, lad,’ said the youngest, who at this moment entered.

In an instant Hobbie had in his arms Grace Armstrong, who, with one of his sisters’ plaids around her, had passed unnoticed at his first entrance. ‘How dared you do this?’ said Hobbie.

‘It wasna my fault,’ said Grace, endeavouring to cover her face with her hands to hide at once her blushes and escape the storm of hearty kisses with which her bridegroom punished her simple stratagem — ‘it wasna my fault, Hobbie; ye should kiss Jeanie and the rest o’ them, for they hae the wyte o’t.’

‘And so I will,’ said Hobbie, and embraced and kissed his sisters and grandmother a hundred times, while the whole party half-laughed, half-cried, in the extremity of their joy. ‘I am the happiest man,’ said Hobbie, throwing himself down on a seat, almost exhausted — ‘I am the happiest man in the world!’

‘Then, O my dear bairn,’ said the good old dame, who lost no opportunity of teaching her lesson of religion at those moments when the heart was best open to receive it — ‘then, O my son, give praise to Him that brings smiles out o’ tears and joy out o’ grief, as He brought light out o’ darkness and the world out o’ naething. Was it not my word, that if ye could say “His will be done,” ye might hae cause to say “His name be praised”?’

‘It was — it was your word, grannie; and I do praise Him for his mercy, and for leaving me a good parent when my ain were gane,’ said honest Hobbie, taking her hand, ‘that puts me in mind to think of Him baith in happiness and distress.’

There was a solemn pause of one or two minutes,

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employed in the exercise of mental devotion, which expressed, in purity and sincerity, the gratitude of the affectionate family to that Providence who had unexpectedly restored to their embraces the friend whom they had lost.

Hobbie's first inquiries were concerning the adventures which Grace had undergone. They were told at length, but amounted in substance to this: That she was awaked by the noise which the ruffians made in breaking into the house, and by the resistance made by one or two of the servants, which was soon overpowered; that, dressing herself hastily, she ran downstairs, and having seen, in the scuffle, Westburnflat's vizard drop off, imprudently named him by his name and besought him for mercy; that the ruffian instantly stopped her mouth, dragged her from the house, and placed her on horseback behind one of his associates.

'I'll break the accursed neck of him,' said Hobbie, 'if there werena another Græme in the land but himsell!'

She proceeded to say that she was carried southward along with the party, and the spoil which they drove before them, until they had crossed the Border. Suddenly a person, known to her as a kinsman of Westburnflat, came riding very fast after the marauders, and told their leader that his cousin had learnt from a sure hand that no luck would come of it unless the lass was restored to her friends. After some discussion the chief of the party seemed to acquiesce. Grace was placed behind her new guardian, who pursued in silence, and with great speed, the least-frequented path to the Heughfoot, and ere evening closed set down the fatigued and terrified damsel within a quarter of a mile of the dwelling of her

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friends. Many and sincere were the congratulations which passed on all sides.

As these emotions subsided, less pleasing considerations began to intrude themselves.

‘This is a miserable place for ye a’,’ said Hobbie, looking around him; ‘I can sleep weel eneugh mysell outbye beside the naig, as I hae done mony a lang night on the hills; but how ye are to put yoursell up, I canna see! And what’s waur, I canna mend it; and what’s waur than a’, the morn may come, and the day after that, without your being a bit better off.’

‘It was a cowardly cruel thing,’ said one of the sisters, looking round, ‘to harry a puir family to the bare wa’s this gate.’

‘And leave us neither stirk nor stot,’ said the youngest brother, who now entered, ‘nor sheep nor lamb, nor aught that eats grass and corn.’

‘If they had ony quarrel wi’ us,’ said Harry, the second brother, ‘were we na ready to have fought it out? And that we should have been a’ frae hame too, ane and a’ upon the hill. Od, an we had been at hame, Will Græme’s stamach shouldna hae wanted its morning; but it’s biding him, is it na, Hobbie?’

‘Our neighbours hae taen a day at the Castleton to gree wi’ him at the sight o’ men,’ said Hobbie, mournfully; ‘they behoved to have it a’ their ain gate, or there was nae help to be got at their hands.’

‘To gree wi’ him!’ exclaimed both his brothers at once, ‘after siccan an act of stouthrife as hasna been heard o’ in the country since the auld riding days!’

‘Very true, billies, and my blood was e’en boiling at it; —but the sight of Grace Armstrong has settled it brawly.’

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‘But the stocking, Hobbie?’ said John Elliot; ‘we’re utterly ruined. Harry and I hae been to gather what was on the outbye land, and there’s scarce a cloot left. I kenna how we’re to carry on. We maun a’ gang to the wars, I think. Westburnflat hasna the means, e’en if he had the will, to make up our loss; there’s nae mends to be got out o’ him, but what ye take out o’ his banes. He hasna a four-footed creature but the vicious blood thing he rides on, and that’s sair trash’d wi’ his night wark. We are ruined stoop and roop.’

Hobbie cast a mournful glance on Grace Armstrong, who returned it with a downcast look and a gentle sigh.

‘Dinna be cast down, bairns,’ said the grandmother, ‘we hae gude friends that winna forsake us in adversity. There’s Sir Thomas Kittleloof is my third cousin by the mother’s side, and he has come by a hantle siller, and been made a Knight-baronet into the bargain, for being ane o’ the commissioners at the Union.’

‘He wadna gie a bodle to save us frae famishing,’ said Hobbie; ‘and, if he did, the bread that I bought wi’t would stick in my throat when I thought it was part of the price of puir auld Scotland’s crown and independence.’

‘There’s the Laird o’ Dunder, ane o’ the auldest families in Tiviotdale.’

‘He’s in the tolbooth, mother — he’s in the Heart of Mid Lowden for a thousand merk he borrowed from Saunders Wyliecoat, the writer.’

‘Poor man!’ exclaimed Mrs. Elliot, ‘can we no send him something, Hobbie?’

‘Ye forget, grannie — ye forget we want help ourselves,’ said Hobbie, somewhat peevishly.

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‘Troth did I, hinny,’ replied the good-natured lady, ‘just at the instant; it’s sae natural to think on ane’s bluid relations before themsells. But there’s young Earnscliff.’

‘He has ower little o’ his ain; and siccan a name to keep up, it wad be a shame,’ said Hobbie, ‘to burden him wi’ our distress. And I’ll tell ye, grannie, it’s needless to sit rhyming ower the style of a’ your kith, kin, and allies, as if there was a charm in their braw names to do us good. The grandees hae forgotten us, and those of our ain degree hae just little enough to gang on wi’ them-sells; ne’er a friend hae we that can or will help us to stock the farm again.’

‘Then, Hobbie, we maun trust in Him that can raise up friends and fortune out o’ the bare moor, as they say.’

Hobbie sprung upon his feet. ‘Ye are right, grannie!’ he exclaimed — ‘ye are right. I do ken a friend on the bare moor that baith can and will help us. The turns o’ this day hae dung my head clean hirdie-girdie. I left as muckle gowd lying on Mucklestane Moor this morning as would plenish the house and stock the Heughfoot twice ower, and I am certain sure Elshie wadna grudge us the use of it.’

‘Elshie!’ said his grandmother in astonishment; ‘what Elshie do you mean?’

‘What Elshie should I mean, but Canny Elshie, the Wight o’ Mucklestane?’ replied Hobbie.

‘God forfend, my bairn, you should gang to fetch water out o’ broken cisterns, or seek for relief frae them that deal wi’ the Evil One! There was never luck in their gifts nor grace in their paths. And the haill country kens that body Elshie’s an unco man. O, if there was the law, and

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the douce quiet administration of justice that makes a kingdom flourish in righteousness, the like o' them suldna be suffered to live! The wizard and the witch are the abomination and the evil thing in the land.'

'Troth, mother,' answered Hobbie, 'ye may say what ye like, but I am in the mind that witches and warlocks havena half the power they had lang syne; at least, sure am I that ae ill-deviser, like auld Ellieslaw, or ae ill-doer, like that d—d villain Westburnflat, is a greater plague and abomination in a countryside than a haill curnie o' the warst witches that ever capered on a broomstick or played cantrips on Fastern's E'en. It wad hae been lang or Elshie had burnt down my house and barns, and I am determined to try if he will do aught to build them up again. He's weel kend a skilfu' man ower a' the country, as far as Brough-under-Stainmore.'

'Bide a wee, my bairn; mind his benefits havena thriven wi' a' body. Jock Howden died o' the very same disorder Elshie pretended to cure him of, about the fa' o' the leaf; and though he helped Lambside's cow weel out o' the moor-ill, yet the loupin-ill's been sairer amang his sheep than ony season before. And then I have heard he uses sic words abusing human nature that's like a fleeing in the face of Providence; and ye mind ye said yoursell, the first time ye ever saw him, that he was mair like a bogle than a living thing.'

'Hout, mother,' said Hobbie, 'Elshie's no that bad a chield; he's a grewsome spectacle for a crooked disciple, to be sure, and a rough talker, but his bark is waur than his bite. Sae, if I had anes something to eat, for I havena had a morsel ower my throat this day, I wad streek my-

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sell down for twa or three hours aside the beast, and be on and awa' to Mucklestane wi' the first skreigh o' morning.'

'And what for no the night, Hobbie,' said Harry, 'and I will ride wi' ye?'

'My naig is tired,' said Hobbie.

'Ye may take mine, then,' said John.

'But I am a wee thing wearied mysell.'

'You wearied?' said Harry; 'shame on ye! I have kend ye keep the saddle four-and-twenty hours thegither, and ne'er sic a word as weariness in your wame.'

'The night's very dark,' said Hobbie, rising and looking through the casement of the cottage; 'and, to speak truth and shame the deil, though Elshie's a real honest fallow, yet somegate I would rather take daylight wi' me when I gang to visit him.'

This frank avowal put a stop to further argument; and Hobbie, having thus compromised matters between the rashness of his brother's counsel and the timid cautions which he received from his grandmother, refreshed himself with such food as the cottage afforded; and, after a cordial salutation all round, retired to the shed and stretched himself beside his trusty palfrey. His brothers shared between them some trusses of clean straw, disposed in the stall usually occupied by old Annapple's cow; and the females arranged themselves for repose as well as the accommodations of the cottage would permit.

With the first dawn of morning Hobbie arose; and, having rubbed down and saddled his horse, he set forth to Mucklestane Moor. He avoided the company of

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either of his brothers, from an idea that the Dwarf was most propitious to those who visited him alone.

‘The creature,’ said he to himself, as he went along, ‘is no neighbourly; ae body at a time is fully mair than he weel can abide. I wonder if he’s looked out o’ the crib o’ him to gather up the bag o’ siller. If he hasna done that, it will hae been a braw windfa’ for somebody, and I’ll be finely flung. Come, Tarras,’ said he to his horse, striking him at the same time with his spur, ‘make mair fit, man; we maun be first on the field if we can.’

He was now on the heath, which began to be illuminated by the beams of the rising sun; the gentle declivity which he was descending presented him a distinct, though distant, view of the Dwarf’s dwelling. The door opened, and Hobbie witnessed with his own eyes that phenomenon which he had frequently heard mentioned. Two human figures (if that of the Dwarf could be termed such) issued from the solitary abode of the Recluse, and stood as if in converse together in the open air. The taller form then stooped, as if taking something up which lay beside the door of the hut, then both moved forward a little way, and again halted, as in deep conference. All Hobbie’s superstitious terrors revived on witnessing this spectacle. That the Dwarf would open his dwelling to a mortal guest was as improbable as that any one would choose voluntarily to be his nocturnal visitor; and, under full conviction that he beheld a wizard holding intercourse with his familiar spirit, Hobbie pulled in at once his breath and his bridle, resolved not to incur the indignation of either by a hasty intrusion on their conference. They were probably aware of his approach, for he had not halted for a

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moment before the Dwarf returned to his cottage; and the taller figure who had accompanied him glided round the inclosure of the garden, and seemed to disappear from the eyes of the admiring Hobbie.

‘Saw ever mortal the like o’ that!’ said Elliot; ‘but my case is desperate, sae, if he were Beelzebub himsell, I’s e venture down the brae on him.’

Yet, notwithstanding his assumed courage, he slackened his pace when, nearly upon the very spot where he had last seen the tall figure, he discerned, as if lurking among the long heather, a small black rough-looking object, like a terrier dog.

‘He has nae dog that ever I heard of,’ said Hobbie, ‘but mony a deil about his hand, Lord forgie me for saying sic a word! It keeps its grund, be what it like. I’m judging it’s a badger; but whae kens what shapes thae bogles will take to fright a body? it will maybe start up like a lion or a crocodile when I come nearer. I’s e’en drive a stane at it, for if it change its shape when I’m ower near, Tarras will never stand it; and it will be ower muckle to hae him and the deil to fight wi’ baith at ance.’

He therefore cautiously threw a stone at the object, which continued motionless. ‘It’s nae living thing, after a,’ said Hobbie, approaching, ‘but the very bag o’ siller he flung out o’ the window yesterday! and that other queer lang creature has just brought it sae muckle farther on the way to me.’ He then advanced and lifted the heavy fur pouch, which was quite full of gold. ‘Mercy on us!’ said Hobbie, whose heart fluttered between glee at the revival of his hopes and prospects in life and suspicion of the purpose for which this assist-

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ance was afforded him — ‘mercy on us! it’s an awfu’ thing to touch what has been sae lately in the claws of something no canny. I canna shake mysell loose o’ the belief that there has been some jookery-paukery of Satan’s in a’ this; but I am determined to conduct mysell like an honest man and a good Christian, come o’t what will.’

He advanced accordingly to the cottage door, and having knocked repeatedly without receiving any answer, he at length elevated his voice and addressed the inmate of the hut. ‘Elshie! Father Elshie! I ken ye’re within doors, and wauking, for I saw ye at the door-cheek as I cam ower the bent; will ye come out and speak just a gliff to ane that has mony thanks to gie ye? It was a’ true ye tell’d me about Westburnflat; but he’s sent back Grace safe and skaithless, sae there’s nae ill happened yet but what may be suffered or sustained. Wad ye but come out a gliff, man, or but say ye’re listening? Aweel, since ye winna answer, I’se e’en proceed wi’ my tale. Ye see I hae been thinking it wad be a sair thing on twa young folk, like Grace and me, to put aff our marriage for mony years till I was abroad and came back again wi’ some gear; and they say folk maunna take booty in the wars as they did lang syne, and the queen’s pay is a sma’ matter; there’s nae gathering gear on that; and then my grandame’s auld; and my sisters wad sit peengin’ at the ingle-side for want o’ me to ding them about; and Earnscliff, or the neighbourhood, or maybe your ain sell, Elshie, might want some good turn that Hob Elliot could do ye; and it’s a pity that the auld house o’ the Heughfoot should be wrecked a’thegither. Sae I was thinking — but deil hae me, that I should

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say sae,' continued he, checking himself, 'if I can bring mysell to ask a favour of ane that winna sae muckle as ware a word on me, to tell me if he hears me speaking till him.'

'Say what thou wilt, do what thou wilt,' answered the Dwarf from his cabin, 'but begone, and leave me at peace.'

'Weel, weel,' replied Elliot, 'since ye are willing to hear me, I'se make my tale short. Since ye are sae kind as to say ye are content to lend me as muckle siller as will stock and plenish the Heughfoot, I am content, on my part, to accept the courtesy wi' mony kind thanks, and troth, I think it will be as safe in my hands as yours, if ye leave it flung about in that gate for the first loon body to lift, forbye the risk o' bad neighbours that can win through steekit doors and lockfast places, as I can tell to my cost. I say, since ye hae sae muckle consideration for me, I'se be blythe to accept your kindness; and my mother and me — she's a life-renter, and I am fiar, o' the lands o' Wideopen — would grant you a wadset or an heritable bond for the siller, and to pay the annual rent half-yearly; and Saunders Wylie-coat to draw the bond, and you to be at nae charge wi' the writings.'

'Cut short thy jargon, and begone,' said the Dwarf; 'thy loquacious bull-headed honesty makes thee a more intolerable plague than the light-fingered courtier who would take a man's all without troubling him with either thanks, explanations, or apology. Hence, I say! thou art one of those tame slaves whose word is as good as their bond. Keep the money, principal and interest, until I demand it of thee.'

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‘But,’ continued the pertinacious Borderer, ‘we are a’ life-like and death-like, Elshie, and there really should be some black and white on this transaction. Sae just make me a minute or missive in ony form ye like, and I’se write it fair ower, and subscribe it before famous witnesses. Only, Elshie, I wad wuss ye to pit nae-thing in’t that may be prejudicial to my salvation; for I’ll hae the minister to read it ower, and it wad only be exposing yoursell to nae purpose. And now I’m ganging awa’, for ye’ll be wearied o’ my cracks, and I am wearied wi’ cracking without an answer; and I’se bring ye a bit o’ bride’s-cake ane o’ thae days, and maybe bring Grace to see you. Ye wad like to see Grace, man, for as dour as ye are. Eh, Lord! I wish he may be weel, that was a sair grane! or maybe he thought I was speaking of heavenly grace, and no of Grace Armstrong. Poor man, I am very doubtfu’ o’ his condition; but I am sure he is as kind to me as if I were his son, and a queer-looking father I wad hae had, if that had been e’en sae.’

Hobbie now relieved his benefactor of his presence, and rode blythely home to display his treasure, and consult upon the means of repairing the damage which his fortune had sustained through the aggression of the Red Reiver of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER XI

Three ruffians seized me yester morn,
Alas! a maiden most forlorn;
They choked my cries with wicked might,
And bound me on a palfrey white:
As sure as Heaven shall pity me,
I cannot tell what men they be.

Christabel.

THE course of our story must here revert a little to detail the circumstances which had placed Miss Vere in the unpleasant situation from which she was unexpectedly, and indeed unintentionally, liberated by the appearance of Earnscliff and Elliot, with their friends and followers, before the Tower of Westburnflat.

On the morning preceding the night in which Hobbie's house was plundered and burnt, Miss Vere was requested by her father to accompany him in a walk through a distant part of the romantic grounds which lay round his castle of Ellieslaw. 'To hear was to obey,' in the true style of Oriental despotism; but Isabella trembled in silence while she followed her father through rough paths, now winding by the side of the river, now ascending the cliffs which serve for its banks. A single servant, selected perhaps for his stupidity, was the only person who attended them. From her father's silence Isabella little doubted that he had chosen this distant and sequestered scene to resume the argument which they had so frequently maintained upon the subject of Sir Frederick's addresses, and that he was meditating in what manner he should most effectually

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impress upon her the necessity of receiving him as her suitor. But her fears seemed for some time to be unfounded. The only sentences which her father from time to time addressed to her respected the beauties of the romantic landscape through which they strolled, and which varied its features at every step. To these observations, although they seemed to come from a heart occupied by more gloomy as well as more important cares, Isabella endeavoured to answer in a manner as free and unconstrained as it was possible for her to assume, amid the involuntary apprehensions which crowded upon her imagination.

Sustaining with mutual difficulty a desultory conversation, they at length gained the centre of a small wood, composed of large oaks, intermingled with birches, mountain-ashes, hazel, holly, and a variety of underwood. The boughs of the tall trees met closely above, and the underwood filled up each interval between their trunks below. The spot on which they stood was rather more open; still, however, embowered under the natural arcade of tall trees, and darkened on the sides for a space around by a great and lively growth of copsewood and bushes.

‘And here, Isabella,’ said Mr. Vere, as he pursued the conversation, so often resumed, so often dropped — ‘here I would erect an altar to Friendship.’

‘To Friendship, sir!’ said Miss Vere; ‘and why on this gloomy and sequestered spot, rather than elsewhere?’

‘O, the propriety of the *locale* is easily vindicated,’ replied her father, with a sneer. ‘You know, Miss Vere — for you, I am well aware, are a learned young lady —

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you know that the Romans were not satisfied with embodying, for the purpose of worship, each useful quality and moral virtue to which they could give a name; but they, moreover, worshipped the same under each variety of titles and attributes which could give a distinct shade or individual character to the virtue in question. Now, for example, the Friendship to whom a temple should be here dedicated is not Masculine Friendship, which abhors and despises duplicity, art, and disguise; but Female Friendship, which consists in little else than a mutual disposition on the part of the friends, as they call themselves, to abet each other in obscure fraud and petty intrigue.'

'You are severe, sir,' said Miss Vere.

'Only just,' said her father; 'a humble copier I am from nature, with the advantage of contemplating two such excellent studies as Lucy Ilderton and yourself.'

'If I have been unfortunate enough to offend, sir, I can conscientiously excuse Miss Ilderton from being either my counsellor or confidante.'

'Indeed! how came you, then,' said Mr. Vere, 'by the flippancy of speech and pertness of argument by which you have disgusted Sir Frederick and given me of late such deep offence?'

'If my manner has been so unfortunate as to displease you, sir, it is impossible for me to apologise too deeply or too sincerely; but I cannot confess the same contrition for having answered Sir Frederick flippantly when he pressed me rudely. Since he forgot I was a lady, it was time to show him that I am at least a woman.'

'Reserve, then, your pertness for those who press you on the topic, Isabella,' said her father, coldly; 'for

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my part, I am weary of the subject, and will never speak upon it again.'

'God bless you, my dear father!' said Isabella, seizing his reluctant hand; 'there is nothing you can impose on me, save the task of listening to this man's persecution, that I will call, or think, a hardship.'

'You are very obliging, Miss Vere, when it happens to suit you to be dutiful,' said her unrelenting father, forcing himself at the same time from the affectionate grasp of her hand; 'but henceforward, child, I shall save myself the trouble of offering you unpleasant advice on any topic. You must look to yourself.'

At this moment four ruffians rushed upon them. Mr. Vere and his servant drew their hangers, which it was the fashion of the time to wear, and attempted to defend themselves and protect Isabella. But while each of them was engaged by an antagonist, she was forced into the thicket by the two remaining villains, who placed her and themselves on horses which stood ready behind the copsewood. They mounted at the same time, and, placing her between them, set off at a round gallop, holding the reins of her horse on each side. By many an obscure and winding path, over dale and down, through moss and moor, she was conveyed to the Tower of Westburnflat where she remained strictly watched, but not otherwise ill-treated, under the guardianship of the old woman to whose son that retreat belonged. No entreaties could prevail upon the hag to give Miss Vere any information on the object of her being carried forcibly off and confined in this secluded place. The arrival of Earnscliff with a strong party of horsemen before the tower alarmed the robber. As he had already

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directed Grace Armstrong to be restored to her friends, it did not occur to him that this unwelcome visit was on her account; and seeing at the head of the party Earnscliff, whose attachment to Miss Vere was whispered in the country, he doubted not that her liberation was the sole object of the attack upon his fastness. The dread of personal consequences compelled him to deliver up his prisoner in the manner we have already related.

At the moment the tramp of horses was heard which carried off the daughter of Ellieslaw, her father fell to the earth, and his servant, a stout young fellow, who was gaining ground on the ruffian with whom he had been engaged, left the combat to come to his master's assistance, little doubting that he had received a mortal wound. Both the villains immediately desisted from farther combat, and, retreating into the thicket, mounted their horses and went off at full speed after their companions. Meantime, Dixon had the satisfaction to find Mr. Vere not only alive, but unwounded. He had overreached himself and stumbled, it seemed, over the root of a tree in making too eager a blow at his antagonist. The despair he felt at his daughter's disappearance was, in Dixon's phrase, such as would have melted the heart of a 'whinstane,' and he was so much exhausted by his feelings, and the vain researches which he made to discover the track of the ravishers, that a considerable time elapsed ere he reached home and communicated the alarm to his domestics.

All his conduct and gestures were those of a desperate man.

'Speak not to me, Sir Frederick,' he said, impatiently; 'you are no father: she was my child, an ungrateful

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one, I fear, but still my child — my only child. Where is Miss Ilderton? She must know something of this. It corresponds with what I was informed of her schemes. Go, Dixon, call Ratcliffe here. Let him come without a minute's delay.'

The person he had named at this moment entered the room.

'I say, Dixon,' continued Mr. Vere, in an altered tone, 'let Mr. Ratcliffe know I beg the favour of his company on particular business. Ah! my dear sir,' he proceeded, as if noticing him for the first time, 'you are the very man whose advice can be of the utmost service to me in this cruel extremity.'

'What has happened, Mr. Vere, to discompose you?' said Mr. Ratcliffe, gravely; and while the Laird of Ellieslaw details to him, with the most animated gestures of grief and indignation, the singular adventure of the morning, we shall take the opportunity to inform our readers of the relative circumstances in which these gentlemen stood to each other.

In early youth Mr. Vere of Ellieslaw had been remarkable for a career of dissipation, which in advanced life he had exchanged for the no less destructive career of dark and turbulent ambition. In both cases he had gratified the predominant passion without respect to the diminution of his private fortune, although, where such inducements were wanting he was deemed close, avaricious, and grasping. His affairs being much embarrassed by his earlier extravagance, he went to England, where he was understood to have formed a very advantageous matrimonial connexion. He was many years absent from his family estate. Suddenly

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and unexpectedly he returned a widower, bringing with him his daughter, then a girl of about ten years old. From this moment his expense seemed unbounded in the eyes of the simple inhabitants of his native mountains. It was supposed he must necessarily have plunged himself deeply in debt. Yet he continued to live in the same lavish expense until some months before the commencement of our narrative, when the public opinion of his embarrassed circumstances was confirmed by the residence of Mr. Ratcliffe at Ellieslaw Castle, who, by the tacit consent, though obviously to the great displeasure, of the lord of the mansion, seemed, from the moment of his arrival, to assume and exercise a predominant and unaccountable influence in the management of his private affairs.

Mr. Ratcliffe was a grave, steady, reserved man, in an advanced period of life. To those with whom he had occasion to speak upon business he appeared uncommonly well versed in all its forms. With others he held little communication; but in any casual intercourse or conversation displayed the powers of an active and well-informed mind. For some time before taking up his final residence at the castle, he had been an occasional visitor there, and was at such times treated by Mr. Vere (contrary to his general practice towards those who were inferior to him in rank) with marked attention, and even deference. Yet his arrival always appeared to be an embarrassment to his host and his departure a relief; so that, when he became a constant inmate of the family it was impossible not to observe indications of the displeasure with which Mr. Vere regarded his presence. Indeed, their intercourse formed a singular mixture of

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confidence and constraint. Mr. Vere's most important affairs were regulated by Mr. Ratcliffe; and, although he was none of those indulgent men of fortune who, too indolent to manage their own business, are glad to devolve it upon another, yet in many instances he was observed to give up his own judgment and submit to the contrary opinions which Mr. Ratcliffe did not hesitate distinctly to express.

Nothing seemed to vex Mr. Vere more than when strangers indicated any observation of the state of tutelage under which he appeared to labour. When it was noticed by Sir Frederick or any of his intimates, he sometimes repelled their remarks haughtily and indignantly, and sometimes endeavoured to evade them by saying, with a forced laugh, 'That Ratcliffe knew his own importance, but that he was the most honest and skilful fellow in the world; and that it would be impossible for him to manage his English affairs without his advice and assistance.' Such was the person who entered the room at the moment Mr. Vere was summoning him to his presence, and who now heard with surprise, mingled with obvious incredulity, the hasty narrative of what had befallen Isabella.

Her father concluded, addressing Sir Frederick and the other gentlemen, who stood around in astonishment, 'And now, my friends, you see the most unhappy father in Scotland. Lend me your assistance, gentlemen; give me your advice, Mr. Ratcliffe. I am incapable of acting or thinking under the unexpected violence of such a blow.'

'Let us take our horses, call our attendants, and scour the country in pursuit of the villains,' said Sir Frederick.

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'Is there no one whom you can suspect,' said Ratcliffe gravely, 'of having some motive for this strange crime? These are not the days of romance, when ladies are carried off merely for their beauty.'

'I fear,' said Mr. Vere, 'I can too well account for this strange incident. Read this letter, which Miss Lucy Ilderton thought fit to address from my house of Ellieslaw to young Mr. Earnscliff, whom, of all men, I have a hereditary right to call my enemy. You see she writes to him as the confidante of a passion which he has the assurance to entertain for my daughter; tells him she serves his cause with her friend very ardently, but that he has a friend in the garrison who serves him yet more effectually. Look particularly at the pencilled passages, Mr. Ratcliffe, where this meddling girl recommends bold measures, with an assurance that his suit would be successful anywhere beyonds the bounds of the barony of Ellieslaw.'

'And you argue, from this romantic letter of a very romantic young lady, Mr. Vere,' said Ratcliffe, 'that young Earnscliff has carried off your daughter, and committed a very great and criminal act of violence, on no better advice and assurance than that of Miss Lucy Ilderton?'

'What else can I think?' said Ellieslaw.

'What else *can* you think?' said Sir Frederick; 'or who else could have any motive for committing such a crime?'

'Were that the best mode of fixing the guilt,' said Mr. Ratcliffe, calmly, 'there might easily be pointed out persons to whom such actions are more congenial, and who have also sufficient motives of instigation. Suppos-

ing it were judged advisable to remove Miss Vere to some place in which constraint might be exercised upon her inclinations to a degree which cannot at present be attempted under the roof of Ellieslaw Castle? What says Sir Frederick Langley to that supposition?’

‘I say,’ returned Sir Frederick, ‘that, although Mr. Vere may choose to endure in Mr. Ratcliffe freedoms totally inconsistent with his situation in life, I will not permit such license of innuendo, by word or look, to be extended to me with impunity.’

‘And I say,’ said young Mareschal of Mareschal Wells, who was also a guest at the castle, ‘that you are all stark mad to be standing wrangling here, instead of going in pursuit of the ruffians.’

‘I have ordered off the domestics already in the track most likely to overtake them,’ said Mr. Vere; ‘if you will favour me with your company, we will follow them and assist in the search.’

The efforts of the party were totally unsuccessful, probably because Ellieslaw directed the pursuit to proceed in the direction of Earnscliff Tower, under the supposition that the owner would prove to be the author of the violence, so that they followed a direction diametrically opposite to that in which the ruffians had actually proceeded. In the evening they returned harassed and out of spirits. But other guests had in the meanwhile arrived at the castle; and after the recent loss sustained by the owner had been related, wondered at, and lamented, the recollection of it was, for the present, drowned in the discussion of deep political intrigues, of which the crisis and explosion were momentarily looked for.

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Several of the gentlemen who took part in this divan were Catholics, and all of them stanch Jacobites, whose hopes were at present at the highest pitch, as an invasion in favour of the Pretender was daily expected from France, which Scotland, between the defenceless state of its garrisons and fortified places and the general disaffection of the inhabitants, was rather prepared to welcome than to resist. Ratcliffe, who neither sought to assist at their consultations on this subject nor was invited to do so, had in the meanwhile retired to his own apartment. Miss Ilderton was sequestered from society in a sort of honourable confinement, 'until,' said Mr. Vere, 'she should be safely conveyed home to her father's house,' an opportunity for which occurred on the following day.

The domestics could not help thinking it remarkable how soon the loss of Miss Vere, and the strange manner in which it had happened, seemed to be forgotten by the other guests at the castle. They knew not that those the most interested in her fate were well acquainted with the cause of her being carried off, and the place of her retreat; and that the others, in the anxious and doubtful moments which preceded the breaking forth of a conspiracy, were little accessible to any feelings but what arose immediately out of their own machinations.

CHAPTER XII

Some one way, some another. Do you know
Where we may apprehend her?

THE researches after Miss Vere were (for the sake of appearances, perhaps) resumed on the succeeding day, with similar bad success, and the party were returning toward Ellieslaw in the evening.

'It is singular,' said Mareschal to Ratcliffe, 'that four horsemen and a female prisoner should have passed through the country without leaving the slightest trace of their passage. One would think they had traversed the air or sunk through the ground.'

'Men may, often,' answered Ratcliffe, 'arrive at the knowledge of that which *is* from discovering that which is *not*. We have now scoured every road, path, and track leading from the castle, in all the various points of the compass, saving only that intricate and difficult pass which leads southward down the Westburn and through the morasses.'

'And why have we not examined that?' said Mareschal.

'O, Mr. Vere can best answer that question,' replied his companion, drily.

'Then I will ask it instantly,' said Mareschal; and addressing Mr. Vere, 'I am informed, sir,' said he, 'there is a path we have not examined, leading by Westburn-flat.'

'O,' said Sir Frederick, laughing, 'we know the owner

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of Westburnflat well — a wild lad, that knows little difference between his neighbour's goods and his own; but, withal, very honest to his principles. He would disturb nothing belonging to Ellieslaw.'

'Besides,' said Mr. Vere, smiling mysteriously, 'he had other tow on his distaff last night. Have you not heard young Elliot of the Heughfoot has had his house burnt and his cattle driven away, because he refused to give up his arms to some honest men that think of starting for the king?'

The company smiled upon each other, as at hearing of an exploit which favoured their own views.

'Yet, nevertheless,' resumed Mareschal, 'I think we ought to ride in this direction also, otherwise we shall certainly be blamed for our negligence.'

No reasonable objection could be offered to this proposal, and the party turned their horses' heads towards Westburnflat.

They had not proceeded very far in that direction when the trampling of horses was heard, and a small body of riders were perceived advancing to meet them.

'There comes Earnscliff,' said Mareschal; 'I know his bright bay with the star in his front.'

'And there is my daughter along with him,' exclaimed Vere, furiously. 'Who shall call my suspicions false or injurious now? Gentlemen, friends, lend me the assistance of your swords for the recovery of my child.'

He unsheathed his weapon, and was imitated by Sir Frederick and several of the party, who prepared to charge those that were advancing towards them. But the greater part hesitated.

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‘They come to us in all peace and security,’ said Mareschal Wells; ‘let us first hear what account they give us of this mysterious affair. If Miss Vere has sustained the slightest insult or injury from Earnscliff, I will be first to revenge her; but let us hear what they say.’

‘You do me wrong by your suspicions, Mareschal,’ continued Vere; ‘you are the last I would have expected to hear express them.’

‘You injure yourself, Ellieslaw, by your violence, though the cause may excuse it.’

He then advanced a little before the rest, and called out with a loud voice — ‘Stand, Mr. Earnscliff; or do you and Miss Vere advance alone to meet us. You are charged with having carried that lady off from her father’s house; and we are here in arms to shed our best blood for her recovery, and for bringing to justice those who have injured her.’

‘And who would do that more willingly than I, Mr. Mareschal?’ said Earnscliff, haughtily — ‘than I, who had the satisfaction this morning to liberate her from the dungeon in which I found her confined, and who am now escorting her back to the Castle of Ellieslaw?’

‘Is this so, Miss Vere?’ said Mareschal.

‘It is,’ answered Isabella, eagerly — ‘it is so; for Heaven’s sake, sheathe your swords. I will swear by all that is sacred that I was carried off by ruffians, whose persons and object were alike unknown to me, and am now restored to freedom by means of this gentleman’s gallant interference.’

‘By whom, and wherefore, could this have been done?’ pursued Mareschal. ‘Had you no knowledge of

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the place to which you were conveyed? Earnscliff, where did you find this lady?’

But ere either question could be answered Ellieslaw advanced and, returning his sword to the scabbard, cut short the conference.

‘When I know,’ he said, ‘exactly how much I owe to Mr. Earnscliff, he may rely on suitable acknowledgments; meantime,’ taking the bridle of Miss Vere’s horse, ‘thus far I thank him for replacing my daughter in the power of her natural guardian.’

A sullen bend of the head was returned by Earnscliff with equal haughtiness; and Ellieslaw, turning back with his daughter upon the road to his own house, appeared engaged with her in a conference so earnest that the rest of the company judged it improper to intrude by approaching them too nearly. In the meantime Earnscliff, as he took leave of the other gentlemen belonging to Ellieslaw’s party, said aloud, ‘Although I am unconscious of any circumstance in my conduct that can authorise such a suspicion, I cannot but observe that Mr. Vere seems to believe that I have had some hand in the atrocious violence which has been offered to his daughter. I request you, gentlemen, to take notice of my explicit denial of a charge so dishonourable; and that, although I can pardon the bewildering feelings of a father in such a moment, yet, if any other gentleman (he looked hard at Sir Frederick Langley) thinks my word and that of Miss Vere, with the evidence of my friends who accompany me, too slight for my exculpation, I will be happy, most happy, to repel the charge as becomes a man who counts his honour dearer than his life.’

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‘And I’ll be his second,’ said Simon of Hackburn, ‘and take up ony twa o’ ye, gentle or semple, laird or loon; it’s a’ ane to Simon.’

‘Who is that rough-looking fellow?’ said Sir Frederick Langley; ‘and what has he to do with the quarrels of gentlemen?’

‘I’se be a lad frae the Hie Te’iot,’ said Simon, ‘and I’se quarrel wi’ ony body I like, except the king or the laird I live under.’

‘Come,’ said Mareschal, ‘let us have no brawls. Mr. Earnscliff, although we do not think alike in some things, I trust we may be opponents, even enemies, if fortune will have it so, without losing our respect for birth, fair-play, and each other. I believe you as innocent of this matter as I am myself; and I will pledge myself that my cousin Ellieslaw, as soon as the perplexity attending these sudden events has left his judgment to its free exercise, shall handsomely acknowledge the very important service you have this day rendered him.’

‘To have served your cousin is a sufficient reward in itself. Good evening, gentlemen,’ continued Earnscliff, ‘I see most of your party are already on their way to Ellieslaw.’

Then saluting Mareschal with courtesy and the rest of the party with indifference, Earnscliff turned his horse and rode towards the Heughfoot, to concert measures with Hobbie Elliot for farther researches after his bride, of whose restoration to her friends he was still ignorant.

‘There he goes,’ said Mareschal; ‘he is a fine, gallant young fellow, upon my soul; and yet I should like well to have a thrust with him on the green turf. I was

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reckoned at college nearly his equal with the foils, and I should like to try him at sharps.'

'In my opinion,' answered Sir Frederick Langley, 'we have done very ill in having suffered him and those men who are with him to go off without taking away their arms; for the Whigs are very likely to draw to a head under such a sprightly young fellow as that.'

'For shame, Sir Frederick!' exclaimed Mareschal. 'Do you think that Ellieslaw could in honour consent to any violence being offered to Earnscliff, when he entered his bounds only to bring back his daughter? or, if he were to be of your opinion, do you think that I, and the rest of these gentlemen, would disgrace ourselves by assisting in such a transaction? No, no, fair play and auld Scotland for ever! When the sword is drawn I will be as ready to use it as any man; but while it is in the sheath let us behave like gentlemen and neighbours.'

Soon after this colloquy they reached the castle, when Ellieslaw, who had been arrived a few minutes before, met them in the courtyard.

'How is Miss Vere? and have you learned the cause of her being carried off?' asked Mareschal, hastily.

'She is retired to her apartment greatly fatigued; and I cannot expect much light upon her adventure till her spirits are somewhat recruited,' replied her father. 'She and I were not the less obliged to you, Mareschal, and to my other friends, for their kind inquiries. But I must suppress the father's feelings for a while to give myself up to those of the patriot. You know this is the day fixed for our final decision; time presses, our friends are arriving, and I have opened house not only for the

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gentry, but for the under spur-leathers whom we must necessarily employ. We have, therefore, little time to prepare to meet them. Look over these lists, Marchie (an abbreviation by which Mareschal Wells was known among his friends). Do you, Sir Frederick, read these letters from Lothian and the west; all is ripe for the sickle, and we have but to summon out the reapers.'

'With all my heart,' said Mareschal; 'the more mischief the better sport.'

Sir Frederick looked grave and disconcerted.

'Walk aside with me, my good friend,' said Ellieslaw to the sombre baronet; 'I have something for your private ear, with which I know you will be gratified.'

They walked into the house, leaving Ratcliffe and Mareschal standing together in the court.

'And so,' said Ratcliffe, 'the gentlemen of your political persuasion think the downfall of this government so certain that they disdain even to throw a decent disguise over the machinations of their party?'

'Faith, Mr. Ratcliffe,' answered Mareschal, 'the actions and sentiments of *your* friends may require to be veiled, but I am better pleased that ours can go bare-faced.'

'And is it possible,' continued Ratcliffe, 'that you, who, notwithstanding your thoughtlessness and heat of temper — I beg pardon, Mr. Mareschal, I am a plain man — that you, who, notwithstanding these constitutional defects, possess natural good sense and acquired information, should be infatuated enough to embroil yourself in such desperate proceedings? How does your head feel when you are engaged in these dangerous conferences?'

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‘Not quite so secure on my shoulders,’ answered Mareschal, ‘as if I were talking of hunting and hawking. I am not of so indifferent a mould as my cousin Ellies-law, who speaks treason as if it were a child’s nursery rhymes and loses and recovers that sweet girl, his daughter, with a good deal less emotion on both occasions than would have affected me had I lost and recovered a greyhound puppy. My temper is not quite so inflexible, nor my hate against government so inveterate, as to blind me to the full danger of the attempt.’

‘Then why involve yourself in it?’ said Ratcliffe.

‘Why, I love this poor exiled king with all my heart; and my father was an old Killiecrankie man, and I long to see some amends on the Unionists and courtiers that have bought and sold old Scotland, whose crown has been so long independent.’

‘And for the sake of these shadows,’ said his monitor, ‘you are going to involve your country in war and yourself in trouble?’

‘*I* involve? No! but, trouble for trouble, I had rather it came to-morrow than a month hence. *Come*, I know it will; and, as your country folk say, better soon than syne, it will never find me younger; and as for hanging, as Sir John Falstaff says, “I can become a gallows as well as another.” You know the end of the old ballad?—

‘Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he,
He play’d a spring, and danc’d it round
Below the gallows-tree.’

‘Mr. Mareschal, I am sorry for you,’ said his grave adviser.

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‘I am obliged to you, Mr. Ratcliffe, but I would not have you judge of our enterprise by my way of vindicating it; there are wiser heads than mine at the work.’

‘Wiser heads than yours may lie as low,’ said Ratcliffe, in a warning tone.

‘Perhaps so; but no lighter heart shall; and, to prevent it being made heavier by your remonstrances, I will bid you adieu, Mr. Ratcliffe, till dinner-time, when you shall see that my apprehensions have not spoiled my appetite.’

CHAPTER XIII

To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurly-burly innovation.

Henry IV, Part I.

THERE had been great preparations made at Ellieslaw Castle for the entertainment on this important day, when not only the gentlemen of note in the neighbourhood attached to the Jacobite interest were expected to rendezvous, but also many subordinate malcontents, whom difficulty of circumstances, love of change, resentment against England, or any of the numerous causes which inflamed men's passions at the time, rendered apt to join in perilous enterprise. The men of rank and substance were not many in number; for almost all the large proprietors stood aloof, and most of the smaller gentry and yeomanry were of the Presbyterian persuasion, and therefore, however displeased with the Union, unwilling to engage in a Jacobite conspiracy. But there were some gentlemen of property who, either from early principle, from religious motives, or sharing the ambitious views of Ellieslaw, had given countenance to his scheme; and there were also some young fiery men, like Mareschal, desirous of signalling themselves by engaging in a dangerous enterprise, by which they hoped to vindicate the independence of their country. The other members of the party were persons of inferior

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rank and desperate fortunes, who were now ready to rise in that part of the country, as they did afterwards in the year 1715, under Forster and Derwentwater, when a troop, commanded by a Border gentleman named Douglas, consisted almost entirely of freebooters, among whom the notorious Luck-in-a-Bag, as he was called, held a distinguished command. We think it necessary to mention these particulars, applicable solely to the province in which our scene lies; because, unquestionably, the Jacobite party in the other parts of the kingdom consisted of much more formidable, as well as much more respectable, materials.

One long table extended itself down the ample hall of Ellieslaw Castle, which was still left much in the state in which it had been one hundred years before, stretching, that is, in gloomy length along the whole side of the castle, vaulted with ribbed arches of free-stone, the groins of which sprung from projecting figures, that, carved into all the wild forms which the fantastic imagination of a Gothic architect could devise, grinned, frowned, and gnashed their tusks at the assembly below. Long narrow windows lighted the banqueting-room on both sides, filled up with stained glass, through which the sun emitted a dusky and discoloured light. A banner which tradition averred to have been taken from the English at the battle of Sark waved over the chair in which Ellieslaw presided, as if to inflame the courage of the guests by reminding them of ancient victories over their neighbours. He himself, a portly figure, dressed on this occasion with uncommon care, and with features which, though of a stern and sinister expression, might well be termed handsome, looked the

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old feudal baron extremely well. Sir Frederick Langley was placed on his right hand, and Mr. Mareschal of Mareschal Wells on his left. Some gentlemen of consideration, with their sons, brothers, and nephews, were seated at the upper end of the table, and among these Mr. Ratcliffe had his place. Beneath the salt-cellar (a massive piece of plate which occupied the midst of the table) sate the *sine nomine turba*, men whose vanity was gratified by holding even this subordinate space at the social board, while the distinction observed in ranking them was a salvo to the pride of their superiors. That the lower house was not very select must be admitted, since Willie of Westburnflat was one of the party. The unabashed audacity of this fellow, in daring to present himself in the house of a gentleman to whom he had just offered so flagrant an insult, can only be accounted for by supposing him conscious that his share in carrying off Miss Vere was a secret safe in her possession and that of her father.

Before this numerous and miscellaneous party was placed a dinner, consisting, not indeed of the delicacies of the season, as the newspapers express it, but of viands ample, solid, and sumptuous, under which the very board groaned. But the mirth was not in proportion to the good cheer. The lower end of the table were, for some time, chilled by constraint and respect on finding themselves members of so august an assembly; and those who were placed around it had those feelings of awe with which P. P., clerk of the parish, describes himself oppressed, when he first uplifted the psalm in presence of those persons of high worship, the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the good Lady Jones, and the great

Sir Thomas Truby. This ceremonious frost, however, soon gave way before the incentives to merriment, which were liberally supplied, and as liberally consumed by the guests of the lower description. They became talkative, loud, and even clamorous in their mirth.

But it was not in the power of wine or brandy to elevate the spirits of those who held the higher places at the banquet. They experienced the chilling revulsion of spirits which often takes place when men are called upon to take a desperate resolution, after having placed themselves in circumstances where it is alike difficult to advance or to recede. The precipice looked deeper and more dangerous as they approached the brink, and each waited with an inward emotion of awe, expecting which of his confederates would set the example by plunging himself down. This inward sensation of fear and reluctance acted differently, according to the various habits and characters of the company. One looked grave; another looked silly; a third gazed with apprehension on the empty seats at the higher end of the table, designed for members of the conspiracy whose prudence had prevailed over their political zeal, and who had absented themselves from their consultations at this critical period; and some seemed to be reckoning up in their minds the comparative rank and prospects of those who were present and absent. Sir Frederick Langley was reserved, moody, and discontented. Ellieslaw himself made such forced efforts to raise the spirits of the company as plainly marked the flagging of his own. Ratcliffe watched the scene with the composure of a vigilant but uninterested spectator. Mareschal alone, true to the thoughtless vivacity of his character, eat and

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drank, laughed and jested, and seemed even to find amusement in the embarrassment of the company.

‘What has damped our noble courage this morning?’ he exclaimed. ‘We seem to be met at a funeral, where the chief mourners must not speak above their breath, while the mutes and the saulies (looking to the lower end of the table) are carousing below. Ellieslaw, when will you *lift*? where sleeps your spirit, man? and what has quelled the high hope of the Knight of Langley Dale?’

‘You speak like a madman,’ said Ellieslaw; ‘do you not see how many are absent?’

‘And what of that?’ said Mareschal. ‘Did you not know before that one-half of the world are better talkers than doers? For my part, I am much encouraged by seeing at least two-thirds of our friends true to the rendezvous, though I suspect one-half of these came to secure the dinner in case of the worst.’

‘There is no news from the coast which can amount to certainty of the King’s arrival,’ said another of the company, in that tone of subdued and tremulous whisper which implies a failure of resolution.

‘Not a line from the Earl of D——, nor a single gentleman from the southern side of the Border,’ said a third.

‘Who is he that wishes for more men from England,’ exclaimed Mareschal, in a theatrical tone of affected heroism,

‘My cousin Ellieslaw? No, my fair cousin,
If we are doom’d to die ——’

‘For God’s sake,’ said Ellieslaw, ‘spare us your folly at present, Mareschal.’

‘Well, then,’ said his kinsman, ‘I’ll bestow my wisdom upon you instead, such as it is. If we have gone

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forward like fools, do not let us go back like cowards. We have done enough to draw upon us both the suspicion and vengeance of the government; do not let us give up before we have done something to deserve it. What, will no one speak? Then I'll leap the ditch the first.' And, starting up, he filled a beer-glass to the brim with claret, and, waving his hand, commanded all to follow his example and to rise up from their seats. All obeyed, the more qualified guests as if passively, the others with enthusiasm. 'Then, my friends, I give you the pledge of the day — The independence of Scotland, and the health of our lawful sovereign, King James' the Eighth, now landed in Lothian, and, as I trust and believe, in full possession of his ancient capital!'

He quaffed off the wine and threw the glass over his head.

'It should never,' he said, 'be profaned by a meaner toast.'

All followed his example, and, amid the crash of glasses and the shouts of the company, pledged themselves to stand or fall with the principles and political interest which their toast expressed.

'You have leaped the ditch with a witness,' said Ellieslaw, apart to Mareschal; 'but I believe it is all for the best; at all events we cannot now retreat from our undertaking. One man alone (looking at Ratcliffe) has refused the pledge; but of that by and by.'

Then, rising up, he addressed the company in a style of inflammatory invective against the government and its measures, but especially the Union; a treaty by means of which, he affirmed, Scotland had been at once cheated of her independence, her commerce, and her

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honour, and laid as a fettered slave at the foot of the rival against whom, through such a length of ages, through so many dangers, and by so much blood, she had honourably defended her rights. This was touching a theme which found a responsive chord in the bosom of every man present.

‘Our commerce is destroyed,’ hallooed old John Rewcastle, a Jedburgh smuggler, from the lower end of the table.

‘Our agriculture is ruined,’ said the Laird of Broken-girth-flow, a territory which, since the days of Adam, had borne nothing but ling and whortle-berries.

‘Our religion is cut up, root and branch,’ said the pimple-nosed pastor of the Episcopal meeting-house at Kirkwhistle.

‘We shall shortly neither dare shoot a deer nor kiss a wench without a certificate from the presbytery and kirk-treasurer,’ said Mareschal Wells.

‘Or make a brandy jeroboam in a frosty morning without license from a commissioner of excise,’ said the smuggler.

‘Or ride over the fell in a moonless night,’ said Westburnflat, ‘without asking leave of young Earnscliff or some Englified justice of the peace. Thae were gude days on the Border when there was neither peace nor justice heard of.’

‘Let us remember our wrongs at Darien and Glen-coe,’ continued Ellieslaw, ‘and take arms for the protection of our rights, our fortunes, our lives, and our families.’

‘Think upon genuine Episcopal ordination, without which there can be no lawful clergy,’ said the divine.

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‘Think of the piracies committed on our East-Indian trade by Green and the English thieves,’ said William Willieson, half-owner and sole skipper of a brig that made four voyages annually between Cockpool and Whitehaven.

‘Remember your liberties,’ rejoined Mareschal, who seemed to take a mischievous delight in precipitating the movements of the enthusiasm which he had excited, like a roguish boy who, having lifted the sluice of a mill-dam, enjoys the clatter of the wheels which he has put in motion, without thinking of the mischief he may have occasioned — ‘remember your liberties,’ he exclaimed; ‘confound cess, press, and presbytery, and the memory of old Willie that first brought them upon us!’

‘Damn the gauger!’ echoed old John Rewcastle; ‘I’ll cleave him wi’ my ain hand.’

‘And confound the country keeper and the constable!’ reëchoed Westburnflat; ‘I’ll weize a brace of balls through them before morning.’

‘We are agreed then,’ said Ellieslaw, when the shouts had somewhat subsided, ‘to bear this state of things no longer?’

‘We are agreed to a man,’ answered his guests.

‘Not literally so,’ said Mr. Ratcliffe; ‘for, though I cannot hope to assuage the violent symptoms which seem so suddenly to have seized upon the company, yet I beg to observe that, so far as the opinion of a single member goes, I do not entirely coincide in the list of grievances which has been announced, and that I do utterly protest against the frantic measures which you seem disposed to adopt for removing them. I can easily suppose much of what has been spoken may have

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arisen out of the heat of the moment, or have been said perhaps in jest. But there are some jests of a nature very apt to transpire; and you ought to remember, gentlemen, that stone walls have ears.'

'Stone walls may have ears,' returned Ellieslaw, eyeing him with a look of triumphant malignity, 'but domestic spies, Mr. Ratcliffe, will soon find themselves without any, if any such dares to continue his abode in a family where his coming was an unauthorised intrusion, where his conduct has been that of a presumptuous meddler, and from which his exit shall be that of a baffled knave, if he does not know how to take a hint.'

'Mr. Vere,' returned Ratcliffe, with calm contempt, 'I am fully aware that, as soon as my presence becomes useless to you, which it must through the rash step you are about to adopt, it will immediately become unsafe to myself, as it has always been hateful to you. But I have one protection, and it is a strong one; for you would not willingly hear me detail before gentlemen and men of honour the singular circumstances in which our connexion took its rise. As to the rest, I rejoice at its conclusion; and, as I think that Mr. Mareschal and some other gentlemen will guarantee the safety of my ears and of my throat — for which last I have more reason to be apprehensive — during the course of the night, I shall not leave your castle till to-morrow morning.'

'Be it so, sir,' replied Mr. Vere; 'you are entirely safe from my resentment, because you are beneath it, and not because I am afraid of your disclosing any family secrets, although, for your own sake, I warn you to beware how you do so. Your agency and intermediation can be of little consequence to one who will win or lose

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all, as lawful right or unjust usurpation shall succeed in the struggle that is about to ensue. Farewell, sir.'

Ratcliffe arose and cast upon him a look, which Vere seemed to sustain with difficulty, and, bowing to those around him, left the room.

This conversation made an impression on many of the company, which Ellieslaw hastened to dispel by entering upon the business of the day. Their hasty deliberations went to organise an immediate insurrection. Ellieslaw, Mareschal, and Sir Frederick Langley were chosen leaders, with powers to direct their farther measures. A place of rendezvous was appointed, at which all agreed to meet early on the ensuing day, with such followers and friends to the cause as each could collect around him. Several of the guests retired to make the necessary preparations; and Ellieslaw made a formal apology to the others, who, with Westburnflat and the old smuggler, continued to ply the bottle stanchly, for leaving the head of the table, as he must necessarily hold a separate and sober conference with the coadjutors whom they had associated with him in the command. The apology was the more readily accepted as he prayed them, at the same time, to continue to amuse themselves with such refreshments as the cellars of the castle afforded. Shouts of applause followed their retreat; and the names of Vere, Langley, and, above all, of Mareschal, were thundered forth in chorus, and bathed with copious bumpers repeatedly, during the remainder of the evening.

When the principal conspirators had retired into a separate apartment, they gazed on each other for a minute with a sort of embarrassment, which in Sir Fred-

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erick's dark features amounted to an expression of discontented sullenness. Mareschal was the first to break the pause, saying, with a loud burst of laughter — 'Well! we are fairly embarked now, gentlemen; *vogue la galère!*'

'We may thank you for the plunge,' said Ellieslaw.

'Yes; but I don't know how far you will thank me,' answered Mareschal, 'when I show you this letter which I received just before we sat down. My servant told me it was delivered by a man he had never seen before, who went off at the gallop, after charging him to put it into my own hand.'

Ellieslaw impatiently opened the letter and read aloud : —

EDINBURGH, —

HOND. SIR,

Having obligations to your family, which shall be nameless, and learning that you are one of the company of adventurers doing business for the house of James and Company, late merchants in London, now in Dunkirk, I think it right to send you this early and private information that the vessels you expected have been driven off the coast, without having been able to break bulk or to land any part of their cargo; and that the west-country partners have resolved to withdraw their name from the firm, as it must prove a losing concern. Having good hope you will avail yourself of this early information to do what is needful for your own security, I rest your humble servant,

NIHIL NAMELESS.

For RALPH MARESCHAL of Mareschal Wells
These, with care and speed.

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Sir Frederick's jaw dropped and his countenance blackened as the letter was read, and Ellieslaw exclaimed, 'Why, this affects the very mainspring of our enterprise. If the French fleet, with the King on board, has been chased off by the English, as this d—d scrawl seems to intimate, where are we?'

'Just where we were this morning, I think,' said Mareschal, still laughing.

'Pardon me, and a truce to your ill-timed mirth, Mr. Mareschal; this morning we were not committed publicly, as we now stand committed by your own mad act, when you had a letter in your pocket apprising you that our undertaking was desperate.'

'Ay, ay, I expected you would say so. But, in the first place, my friend Nihil Nameless and his letter may be all a flam; and, moreover, I would have you know that I am tired of a party that does nothing but form bold resolutions over night, and sleep them away with their wine before morning. The government are now unprovided of men and ammunition; in a few weeks they will have enough of both. The country is now in a flame against them; in a few weeks, betwixt the effects of self-interest, of fear, and of lukewarm indifference, which are already so visible, this first fervour will be as cold as Christmas. So, as I was determined to go the vole, I have taken care you shall dip as deep as I. It signifies nothing plunging: you are fairly in the bog, and must struggle through.'

'You are mistaken with respect to one of us, Mr. Mareschal,' said Sir Frederick Langley; and, applying himself to the bell, he desired the person who entered to order his servants and horses instantly.

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‘You must not leave us, Sir Frederick,’ said Ellieslaw; ‘we have our musters to go over.’

‘I will go to-night, Mr. Vere,’ said Sir Frederick, ‘and write you my intentions in this matter when I am at home.’

‘Ay,’ said Mareschal, ‘and send them by a troop of horse from Carlisle to make us prisoners? Look ye, Sir Frederick, I for one will neither be deserted nor betrayed; and if you leave Ellieslaw Castle to-night, it shall be by passing over my dead body.’

‘For shame! Mareschal,’ said Mr. Vere, ‘how can you so hastily misinterpret our friend’s intentions? I am sure Sir Frederick can only be jesting with us; for, were he not too honourable to dream of deserting the cause, he cannot but remember the full proofs we have of his accession to it and his eager activity in advancing it. He cannot but be conscious, besides, that the first information will be readily received by government, and that, if the question be which can first lodge intelligence of the affair, we can easily save a few hours on him.’

‘You should say *you*, and not we, when you talk of priorities in such a race of treachery; for my part, I won’t enter my horse for such a plate,’ said Mareschal, and added betwixt his teeth, ‘A pretty pair of fellows to trust a man’s neck with!’

‘I am not to be intimidated from doing what I think proper,’ said Sir Frederick Langley; ‘and my first step shall be to leave Ellieslaw. I have no reason to keep faith with one (looking at Vere) who has kept none with me.’

‘In what respect?’ said Ellieslaw, silencing with a

motion of his hand his impetuous kinsman; 'how have I disappointed you, Sir Frederick?'

'In the nearest and most tender point; you have trifled with me concerning our proposed alliance, which you well knew was the gage of our political undertaking. This carrying off and this bringing back of Miss Vere, the cold reception I have met with from her, and the excuses with which you cover it, I believe to be mere evasions, that you may yourself retain possession of the estates which are hers by right, and make me, in the meanwhile, a tool in your desperate enterprise, by holding out hopes and expectations which you are resolved never to realise.'

'Sir Frederick, I protest, by all that is sacred —'

'I will listen to no protestations; I have been cheated with them too long,' answered Sir Frederick.

'If you leave us,' said Ellieslaw, 'you cannot but know both your ruin and ours is certain; all depends on our adhering together.'

'Leave me to take care of myself,' returned the knight; 'but were what you say true, I would rather perish than be fooled any farther.'

'Can nothing — no surety — convince you of my sincerity?' said Ellieslaw, anxiously. 'This morning I should have repelled your unjust suspicions as an insult; but situated as we now are —'

'You feel yourself compelled to be sincere?' retorted Sir Frederick. 'If you would have me think so, there is but one way to convince me of it: let your daughter bestow her hand on me this evening.'

'So soon? impossible,' answered Vere. 'Think of her late alarm, of our present undertaking.'

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‘I will listen to nothing but to her consent, plighted at the altar. You have a chapel in the castle; Dr. Hobbler is present among the company; this proof of your good faith to-night, and we are again joined in heart and hand. If you refuse me when it is so much for your advantage to consent, how shall I trust you to-morrow, when I shall stand committed in your undertaking and unable to retract?’

‘And I am to understand that, if you can be made my son-in-law to-night, our friendship is renewed?’ said Ellieslaw.

‘Most infallibly and most inviolably,’ replied Sir Frederick.

‘Then,’ said Vere, ‘though what you ask is premature, indelicate, and unjust towards my character, yet, Sir Frederick, give me your hand; my daughter shall be your wife.’

‘This night?’

‘This very night,’ replied Ellieslaw, ‘before the clock strikes twelve.’

‘With her own consent, I trust,’ said Mareschal; ‘for I promise you both, gentlemen, I will not stand tamely by and see any violence put on the will of my pretty kinswoman.’

‘Another pest in this hot-headed fellow,’ muttered Ellieslaw; and then aloud, ‘With her own consent? For what do you take me, Mareschal, that you should suppose your interference necessary to protect my daughter against her father? Depend upon it, she has no repugnance to Sir Frederick Langley.’

‘Or rather to be called Lady Langley? Faith, like enough, there are many women might be of her mind;

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and I beg your pardon, but these sudden demands and concessions alarmed me a little on her account.'

'It is only the suddenness of the proposal that embarrasses me,' said Ellieslaw; 'but perhaps, if she is found intractable, Sir Frederick will consider —'

'I will consider nothing, Mr. Vere; your daughter's hand to-night, or I depart, were it at midnight — there is my ultimatum.'

'I embrace it,' said Ellieslaw; 'and I will leave you to talk upon our military preparations, while I go to prepare my daughter for so sudden a change of condition.'

So saying, he left the company.

CHAPTER XIV

He brings Earl Osmond to receive my vows.
O dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond.

Tancred and Sigismunda.

MR. VERE, whom long practice of dissimulation had enabled to model his very gait and footsteps to aid the purposes of deception, walked along the stone passage and up the first flight of steps towards Miss Vere's apartment with the alert, firm, and steady pace of one who is bound, indeed, upon important business, but who entertains no doubt he can terminate his affairs satisfactorily. But when out of hearing of the gentlemen whom he had left, his step became so slow and irresolute as to correspond with his doubts and fears. At length he paused in an antechamber to collect his ideas and form his plan of argument before approaching his daughter.

'In what more hopeless and inextricable dilemma was ever an unfortunate man involved!' Such was the tenor of his reflections. 'If we now fall to pieces by disunion, there can be little doubt that the government will take my life as the prime agitator of the insurrection. Or, grant I could stoop to save myself by a hasty submission, am I not, even in that case, utterly ruined? I have broken irreconcilably with Ratcliffe, and can have nothing to expect from that quarter but insult and persecution. I must wander forth an impoverished and dishonoured man, without even the means of sustaining life, far less wealth sufficient to counterbalance

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the infamy which my countrymen, both those whom in the case supposed I desert and those whom I join, will attach to the name of the political renegade. It is not to be thought of. And yet, what choice remains between this lot and the ignominious scaffold? Nothing can save me but reconciliation with these men; and, to accomplish this, I have promised to Langley that Isabella shall marry him ere midnight, and to Mareschal, that she shall do so without compulsion. I have but one remedy betwixt me and ruin — her consent to take a suitor whom she dislikes, upon such short notice as would disgust her even were he a favoured lover. But I must trust to the romantic generosity of her disposition; and let me paint the necessity of her obedience ever so strongly, I cannot overcharge its reality.'

Having finished this sad chain of reflections upon his perilous condition, he entered his daughter's apartment with every nerve bent up to the support of the argument which he was about to sustain. Though a deceitful and ambitious man, he was not so devoid of natural affection but that he was shocked at the part he was about to act, in practising on the feelings of a dutiful and affectionate child; but the recollections that, if he succeeded, his daughter would only be trepanned into an advantageous match, and that, if he failed he himself was a lost man, were quite sufficient to drown all scruples.

He found Miss Vere seated by the window of her dressing-room, her head reclining on her hand, and either sunk in slumber or so deeply engaged in meditation that she did not hear the noise he made at his entrance. He approached with his features composed to a

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deep expression of sorrow and sympathy, and, sitting down beside her, solicited her attention by quietly taking her hand, a motion which he did not fail to accompany with a deep sigh.

‘My father!’ said Isabella, with a sort of start, which expressed at least as much fear as joy or affection.

‘Yes, Isabella,’ said Vere, ‘your unhappy father, who comes now as a penitent to crave forgiveness of his daughter for an injury done to her in the excess of his affection, and then to take leave of her for ever.’

‘Sir! Offence to me! Take leave for ever! What does all this mean?’ said Miss Vere.

‘Yes, Isabella, I am serious. But first let me ask you, have you no suspicion that I may have been privy to the strange chance which befell you yesterday morning?’

‘You, sir?’ answered Isabella, stammering between a consciousness that he had guessed her thoughts justly and the shame as well as fear which forbade her to acknowledge a suspicion so degrading and so unnatural.

‘Yes,’ he continued, ‘your hesitation confesses that you entertained such an opinion, and I have now the painful task of acknowledging that your suspicions have done me no injustice. But listen to my motives. In an evil hour I countenanced the addresses of Sir Frederick Langley, conceiving it impossible that you could have any permanent objections to a match where the advantages were, in most respects, on your side. In a word, I entered with him into measures calculated to restore our banished monarch and the independence of my country. He has taken advantage of my unguarded confidence, and now has my life at his disposal.’

‘Your life, sir?’ said Isabella, faintly.

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‘Yes, Isabella,’ continued her father, ‘the life of him who gave life to you. So soon as I foresaw the excesses into which his headlong passion — for, to do him justice, I believe his unreasonable conduct arises from excess of attachment to you — was likely to hurry him, I endeavoured, by finding a plausible pretext for your absence for some weeks, to extricate myself from the dilemma in which I am placed. For this purpose I wished, in case your objections to the match continued insurmountable, to have sent you privately for a few months to the convent of your maternal aunt at Paris. By a series of mistakes you have been brought from the place of secrecy and security which I had destined for your temporary abode. Fate has baffled my last chance of escape, and I have only to give you my blessing and send you from the castle with Mr. Ratcliffe, who now leaves it; my own fate will soon be decided.’

‘Good Heaven, sir! can this be possible?’ exclaimed Isabella. ‘O, why was I freed from the restraint in which you placed me? or why did you not impart your pleasure to me?’

‘Think an instant, Isabella. Would you have had me prejudice in your opinion the friend I was most desirous of serving, by communicating to you the injurious eagerness with which he pursued his object? Could I do so honourably, having promised to assist his suit? But it is all over. I and Mareschal have made up our minds to die like men; it only remains to send you from hence under a safe escort.’

‘Great powers! and is there no remedy?’ said the terrified young woman.

‘None, my child,’ answered Vere, gently, ‘unless

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one which you would not advise your father to adopt — to be the first to betray his friends.'

'O, no! no!' she answered, abhorrently yet hastily, as if to reject the temptation which the alternative presented to her. 'But is there no other hope — through flight, through mediation, through supplication? I will bend my knee to Sir Frederick!'

'It would be a fruitless degradation; he is determined on his course, and I am equally resolved to stand the hazard of my fate. On one condition only he will turn aside from his purpose, and that condition my lips shall never utter to you.'

'Name it, I conjure you, my dear father!' exclaimed Isabella. 'What *can* he ask that we ought not to grant, to prevent the hideous catastrophe with which you are threatened?'

'That, Isabella,' said Vere, solemnly, 'you shall never know until your father's head has rolled on the bloody scaffold; then, indeed, you will learn there was one sacrifice by which he might have been saved.'

'And why not speak it now?' said Isabella; 'do you fear I would flinch from the sacrifice of fortune for your preservation? or would you bequeath me the bitter legacy of life-long remorse, so oft as I shall think that you perished while there remained one mode of preventing the dreadful misfortune that overhangs you?'

'Then, my child,' said Vere, 'since you press me to name what I would a thousand times rather leave in silence, I must inform you that he will accept for ransom nothing but your hand in marriage, and that conferred before midnight this very evening!'

'This evening, sir!' said the young lady, struck with

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horror at the proposal — ‘and to such a man! A man? a monster, who could wish to win the daughter by threatening the life of the father; it is impossible!’

‘You say right, my child,’ answered her father, ‘it is indeed impossible; nor have I either the right or the wish to exact such a sacrifice. It is the course of nature that the old should die and be forgot, and the young should live and be happy.’

‘My father die, and his child can save him! but no — no — my dear father, pardon me, it is impossible; you only wish to guide me to your wishes. I know your object is what you think my happiness, and this dreadful tale is only told to influence my conduct and subdue my scruples.’

‘My daughter,’ replied Ellieslaw, in a tone where offended authority seemed to struggle with parental affection — ‘my child suspects me of inventing a false tale to work upon her feelings! Even this I must bear, and even from this unworthy suspicion I must descend to vindicate myself. You know the stainless honour of your cousin Mareschal; mark what I shall write to him, and judge from his answer if the danger in which we stand is not real, and whether I have not used every means to avert it.’

He sate down, wrote a few lines hastily and handed them to Isabella, who, after repeated and painful efforts, cleared her eyes and head sufficiently to discern their purport.

‘Dear cousin,’ said the billet, ‘I find my daughter, as I expected, in despair at the untimely and premature urgency of Sir Frederick Langley. She cannot even

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comprehend the peril in which we stand, or how much we are in his power. Use your influence with him, for Heaven's sake, to modify proposals to the acceptance of which I cannot, and will not, urge my child against all her own feelings, as well as those of delicacy and propriety, and oblige your loving cousin, R. V.'

In the agitation of the moment, when her swimming eyes and dizzy brain could hardly comprehend the sense of what she looked upon, it is not surprising that Miss Vere should have omitted to remark that this letter seemed to rest her scruples rather upon the form and time of the proposed union than on a rooted dislike to the suitor proposed to her. Mr. Vere rang the bell and gave the letter to a servant to be delivered to Mr. Mareschal, and, rising from his chair, continued to traverse the apartment in silence and in great agitation until the answer was returned. He glanced it over, and wrung the hand of his daughter as he gave it to her. The tenor was as follows: —

'MY DEAR KINSMAN — I have already urged the knight on the point you mention, and I find him as fixed as Cheviot. I am truly sorry my fair cousin should be pressed to give up any of her maidenly rights. Sir Frederick consents, however, to leave the castle with me the instant the ceremony is performed, and we will raise our followers and begin the fray. Thus there is great hope the bridegroom may be knocked on the head before he and the bride can meet again, so Bell has a fair chance to be Lady Langley *à très bon marché*. For the rest, I can only say that, if she can make up her

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mind to the alliance at all — it is no time for mere maiden ceremony — my pretty cousin must needs consent to marry in haste, or we shall all repent at leisure, or rather have very little leisure to repent; which is all at present from him who rests your affectionate kinsman,
R. M.'

'P.S. — Tell Isabella that I would rather cut the knight's throat after all, and end the dilemma that way, than see her constrained to marry him against her will.'

When Isabella had read this letter it dropped from her hand, and she would, at the same time, have fallen from her chair, had she not been supported by her father.

'My God, my child will die!' exclaimed Vere, the feelings of nature overcoming, even in *his* breast, the sentiments of selfish policy; 'look up, Isabella — look up, my child; come what will, you shall not be the sacrifice. I will fall myself with the consciousness I leave you happy. My child may weep on my grave, but she shall not — not in this instance — reproach my memory.' He called a servant. 'Go, bid Ratcliffe come hither directly.'

During this interval Miss Vere became deadly pale, clenched her hands, pressing the palms strongly together, closed her eyes, and drew her lips with strong compression, as if the severe constraint which she put upon her internal feelings extended even to her muscular organization. Then raising her head and drawing in her breath strongly ere she spoke, she said, with firmness, 'Father, I consent to the marriage.'

'You shall not — you shall not; my child — my dear

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child, you shall not embrace certain misery to free me from uncertain danger.' So exclaimed Ellieslaw; and, strange and inconsistent beings that we are! he expressed the real though momentary feelings of his heart.

'Father,' repeated Isabella, 'I will consent to this marriage.'

'No, my child, no; not now at least. We will humble ourselves to obtain delay from him; and yet, Isabella, could you overcome a dislike which has no real foundation, think, in other respects, what a match! — wealth, rank, importance.'

'Father!' reiterated Isabella, 'I have consented.'

It seemed as if she had lost the power of saying anything else, or even of varying the phrase which, with such effort, she had compelled herself to utter.

'Heaven bless thee, my child! — Heaven bless thee! And it *will* bless thee with riches, with pleasure, with power.'

Miss Vere faintly entreated to be left by herself for the rest of the evening.

'But will you not receive Sir Frederick?' said her father, anxiously.

'I will meet him,' she replied — 'I will meet him — when I must, and where I must; but spare me now.'

'Be it so, my dearest; you shall know no restraint that I can save you from. Do not think too hardly of Sir Frederick for this; it is an excess of passion.'

Isabella waved her hand impatiently.

'Forgive me, my child; I go. Heaven bless thee! At eleven — if you call me not before — at eleven I come to seek you.'

When he left Isabella she dropped upon her knees. —

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‘Heaven aid me to support the resolution I have taken, Heaven only can! O, poor Earnscliff! who shall comfort him? and with what contempt will he pronounce her name who listened to him to-day and gave herself to another at night! But let him despise me, better so than that he should know the truth. Let him despise me; if it will but lessen his grief, I should feel comfort in the loss of his esteem.’

She wept bitterly; attempting in vain, from time to time, to commence the prayer for which she had sunk on her knees, but unable to calm her spirits sufficiently for the exercise of devotion. As she remained in this agony of mind the door of her apartment was slowly opened.

CHAPTER XV

The darksome cave they enter, where they found
The woful man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind.

Faërie Queene

THE intruder on Miss Vere's sorrows was Ratcliffe. Ellieslaw had, in the agitation of his mind, forgotten to countermand the order he had given to call him thither, so that he opened the door with the words, 'You sent for me, Mr. Vere.' Then looking around — 'Miss Vere, alone! on the ground! and in tears!'

'Leave me — leave me, Mr. Ratcliffe,' said the unhappy young lady.

'I must not leave you,' said Ratcliffe; 'I have been repeatedly requesting admittance to take my leave of you, and have been refused, until your father himself sent for me. Blame me not if I am bold and intrusive; I have a duty to discharge which makes me so.'

'I cannot listen to you, I cannot speak to you, Mr. Ratcliffe; take my best wishes, and for God's sake leave me.'

'Tell me only,' said Ratcliffe, 'is it true that this monstrous match is to go forward, and this very night? I heard the servants proclaim it as I was on the great staircase; I heard the directions given to clear out the chapel.'

'Spare me, Mr. Ratcliffe,' replied the luckless bride; 'and, from the state in which you see me, judge of the cruelty of these questions.'

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‘Married! to Sir Frederick Langley! and this night! It must not — cannot — shall not be.’

‘It *must* be, Mr. Ratcliffe, or my father is ruined.’

‘Ah! I understand,’ answered Ratcliffe; ‘and you have sacrificed yourself to save him who — But let the virtue of the child atone for the faults of the father; it is no time to rake them up. What *can* be done? Time presses. I know but one remedy; with four-and-twenty hours I might find many. Miss Vere, you must implore the protection of the only human being who has it in his power to control the course of events which threatens to hurry you before it.’

‘And what human being,’ answered Miss Vere, ‘has such power?’

‘Start not when I name him,’ said Ratcliffe, coming near her, and speaking in a low but distinct voice. ‘It is he who is called Elshender, the Recluse of Muckle-stane Moor.’

‘You are mad, Mr. Ratcliffe, or you mean to insult my misery by an ill-timed jest!’

‘I am as much in my senses, young lady,’ answered her adviser, ‘as you are; and I am no idle jester, far less with misery, least of all with your misery. I swear to you that this being, who is other far than what he seems, actually possesses the means of redeeming you from this hateful union.’

‘And of ensuring my father’s safety?’

‘Yes! even that,’ said Ratcliffe, ‘if you plead his cause with him. Yet how to obtain admittance to the Recluse!’

‘Fear not that,’ said Miss Vere, suddenly recollecting the incident of the rose; ‘I remember he desired me

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to call upon him for aid in my extremity, and gave me this flower as a token. Ere it faded away entirely, I would need, he said, his assistance; is it possible his words can have been aught but the ravings of insanity?’

‘Doubt it not, fear it not; but above all,’ said Ratcliffe, ‘let us lose no time. Are you at liberty and unwatched?’

‘I believe so,’ said Isabella; ‘but what would you have me to do?’

‘Leave the castle instantly,’ said Ratcliffe, ‘and throw yourself at the feet of this extraordinary man, who, in circumstances that seem to argue the extremity of the most contemptible poverty, possesses yet an almost absolute influence over your fate. Guests and servants are deep in their carouse, the leaders sitting in conclave on their treasonable schemes. My horse stands ready in the stable; I will saddle one for you, and meet you at the little garden gate. O, let no doubt of my prudence or fidelity prevent your taking the only step in your power to escape the dreadful fate which must attend the wife of Sir Frederick Langley!’

‘Mr. Ratcliffe,’ said Miss Vere, ‘you have always been esteemed a man of honour and probity, and a drowning wretch will always catch at the feeblest twig: I will trust you, I will follow your advice, I will meet you at the garden gate.’

She bolted the outer door of her apartment as soon as Mr. Ratcliffe left her, and descended to the garden by a separate stair of communication which opened to her dressing-room. On the way she felt inclined to retract the consent she had so hastily given to a plan so

hopeless and extravagant. But as she passed in her descent a private door which entered into the chapel from the backstair, she heard the voice of the female servants as they were employed in the task of cleaning it.

‘Married! and to sae bad a man. Ewhow, sirs! ony thing rather than that.’

‘They are right — they are right,’ said Miss Vere; ‘anything rather than that!’

She hurried to the garden. Mr. Ratcliffe was true to his appointment: the horses stood saddled at the garden gate, and in a few minutes they were advancing rapidly towards the hut of the Solitary.

While the ground was favourable the speed of their journey was such as to prevent much communication; but when a steep ascent compelled them to slacken their pace, a new cause of apprehension occurred to Miss Vere’s mind.

‘Mr. Ratcliffe,’ she said, pulling up her horse’s bridle, ‘let us prosecute no further a journey which nothing but the extreme agitation of my mind can vindicate my having undertaken. I am well aware that this man passes among the vulgar as being possessed of supernatural powers, and carrying on an intercourse with beings of another world; but I would have you aware I am neither to be imposed on by such follies, nor, were I to believe in their existence, durst I, with my feelings of religion, apply to this being in my distress.’

‘I should have thought, Miss Vere,’ replied Ratcliffe, ‘my character and habits of thinking were so well known to you that you might have held me exculpated from crediting in such absurdity.’

Vale of Manor Water



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‘But in what other mode,’ said Isabella, ‘can a being so miserable himself in appearance possess the power of assisting me?’

‘Miss Vere,’ said Ratcliffe, after a momentary pause, ‘I am bound by a solemn oath of secrecy. You must, without farther explanation, be satisfied with my pledged assurance that he does possess the power, if you can inspire him with the will; and that, I doubt not, you will be able to do.’

‘Mr. Ratcliffe,’ said Miss Vere, ‘you may yourself be mistaken; you ask an unlimited degree of confidence from me.’

‘Recollect, Miss Vere,’ he replied, ‘that when, in your humanity, you asked me to interfere with your father in favour of Haswell and his ruined family — when you requested me to prevail on him to do a thing most abhorrent to his nature, to forgive an injury and remit a penalty — I stipulated that you should ask me no questions concerning the sources of my influence. You found no reason to distrust me then, do not distrust me now.’

‘But the extraordinary mode of life of this man,’ said Miss Vere; ‘his seclusion, his figure, the deepness of misanthropy which he is said to express in his language. Mr. Ratcliffe, what can I think of him if he really possesses the powers you ascribe to him?’

‘This man, young lady, was bred a Catholic, a sect which affords a thousand instances of those who have retired from power and affluence to voluntary privations more strict even than his.’

‘But he avows no religious motive,’ replied Miss Vere.

‘No,’ replied Ratcliffe; ‘disgust with the world has

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operated his retreat from it without assuming the veil of superstition. Thus far I may tell you — he was born to great wealth, which his parents designed should become greater by his union with a kinswoman, whom for that purpose they bred up in their own house. You have seen his figure; judge what the young lady must have thought of the lot to which she was destined. Yet, habituated to his appearance, she showed no reluctance, and the friends of — of the person whom I speak of, doubted not that the excess of his attachment, the various acquisitions of his mind, his many and amiable qualities, had overcome the natural horror which his destined bride must have entertained at an exterior so dreadfully inauspicious.'

'And did they judge truly?' said Isabella.

'You shall hear. He, at least, was fully aware of his own deficiency; the sense of it haunted him like a phantom. "I am," was his own expression to me — I mean to a man whom he trusted — "I am, in spite of what you would say, a poor miserable outcast, fitter to have been smothered in the cradle than to have been brought up to scare the world in which I crawl." The person whom he addressed in vain endeavoured to impress him with the indifference to external form which is the natural result of philosophy, or entreat him to recall the superiority of mental talents to the more attractive attributes that are merely personal. "I hear you," he would reply; "but you speak the voice of cold-blooded stoicism, or, at least, of friendly partiality. But look at every book which we have read, those excepted of that abstract philosophy which feels no responsive voice in our natural feelings. Is not personal form, such as at

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least can be tolerated without horror and disgust, always represented as essential to our ideas of a friend, far more a lover? Is not such a misshapen monster as I am excluded, by the very fiat of Nature, from her fairest enjoyments? What but my wealth prevents all — perhaps even Letitia or you — from shunning me as something foreign to your nature, and more odious by bearing that distorted resemblance to humanity which we observe in the animal tribes that are more hateful to man because they seem his caricature?'''

'You repeat the sentiments of a madman,' said Miss Vere.

'No,' replied her conductor, 'unless a morbid and excessive sensibility on such a subject can be termed insanity. Yet I will not deny that this governing feeling and apprehension carried the person who entertained it to lengths which indicated a deranged imagination. He appeared to think that it was necessary for him, by exuberant and not always well-chosen instances of liberality, and even profusion, to unite himself to the human race, from which he conceived himself naturally dissevered. The benefits which he bestowed, from a disposition naturally philanthropical in an uncommon degree, were exaggerated by the influence of the goading reflection that more was necessary from him than from others — lavishing his treasures as if to bribe mankind to receive him into their class. It is scarcely necessary to say that the bounty which flowed from a source so capricious was often abused, and his confidence frequently betrayed. These disappointments, which occur to all more or less, and most to such as confer benefits without just discrimination, his diseased fancy set down

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to the hatred and contempt excited by his personal deformity. But I fatigue you, Miss Vere?’

‘No, by no means; I — I could not prevent my attention from wandering an instant; pray proceed.’

‘He became at length,’ continued Ratcliffe, ‘the most ingenious self-tormentor of whom I have ever heard; the scoff of the rabble, and the sneer of the yet more brutal vulgar of his own rank, was to him agony and breaking on the wheel. He regarded the laugh of the common people whom he passed on the street, and the suppressed titter, or yet more offensive terror, of the young girls to whom he was introduced in company, as proofs of the true sense which the world entertained of him, as a prodigy unfit to be received among them on the usual terms of society, and as vindicating the wisdom of his purpose in withdrawing himself from among them. On the faith and sincerity of two persons alone he seemed to rely implicitly — on that of his betrothed bride and of a friend eminently gifted in personal accomplishments, who seemed, and indeed probably was, sincerely attached to him. He ought to have been so at least, for he was literally loaded with benefits by him whom you are now about to see. The parents of the subject of my story died within a short space of each other. Their death postponed the marriage, for which the day had been fixed. The lady did not seem greatly to mourn this delay, perhaps that was not to have been expected; but she intimated no change of intention when, after a decent interval, a second day was named for their union. The friend of whom I spoke was then a constant resident at the Hall. In an evil hour, at the earnest request and entreaty of this friend, they joined a general party, where

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men of different political opinions were mingled, and where they drank deep. A quarrel ensued; the friend of the Recluse drew his sword with others, and was thrown down and disarmed by a more powerful antagonist. They fell in the struggle at the feet of the Recluse, who, maimed and truncated as his form appears, possesses, nevertheless, great strength, as well as violent passions. He caught up a sword, pierced the heart of his friend's antagonist, was tried, and his life, with difficulty, redeemed from justice at the expense of a year's close imprisonment, the punishment of manslaughter. The incident affected him most deeply, the more that the deceased was a man of excellent character, and had sustained gross insult and injury ere he drew his sword. I think, from that moment, I observed — I beg pardon — the fits of morbid sensibility which had tormented this unfortunate gentleman were rendered henceforth more acute by remorse, which he, of all men, was least capable of having incurred, or of sustaining when it became his unhappy lot. His paroxysms of agony could not be concealed from the lady to whom he was betrothed; and it must be confessed they were of an alarming and fearful nature. He comforted himself that, at the expiry of his imprisonment, he could form with his wife and friend a society, encircled by which he might dispense with more extensive communication with the world. He was deceived; before that term elapsed his friend and his betrothed bride were man and wife. The effects of a shock so dreadful on an ardent temperament, a disposition already soured by bitter remorse, and loosened by the indulgence of a gloomy imagination from the rest of mankind, I cannot describe to you; it

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was as if the last cable at which the vessel rode had suddenly parted, and left her abandoned to all the wild fury of the tempest. He was placed under medical restraint. As a temporary measure this might have been justifiable; but his hard-hearted friend, who, in consequence of his marriage, was now his nearest ally, prolonged his confinement in order to enjoy the management of his immense estates. There was one who owed his all to the sufferer, an humble friend, but grateful and faithful. By unceasing exertion and repeated invocation of justice, he at length succeeded in obtaining his patron's freedom and reinstatement in the management of his own property, to which was soon added that of his intended bride, who having died without male issue, her estates reverted to him, as heir of entail. But freedom and wealth were unable to restore the equipoise of his mind: to the former his grief made him indifferent; the latter only served him as far as it afforded him the means of indulging his strange and wayward fancy. He had renounced the Catholic religion, but perhaps some of its doctrines continued to influence a mind over which remorse and misanthropy now assumed, in appearance, an unbounded authority. His life has since been that alternately of a pilgrim and a hermit, suffering the most severe privations, not indeed in ascetic devotion, but in abhorrence of mankind. Yet no man's words and actions have been at such a wide difference, nor has any hypocritical wretch ever been more ingenious in assigning good motives for his vile actions than this unfortunate in reconciling to his abstract principles of misanthropy a conduct which flows from his natural generosity and kindness of feeling.'

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‘Still, Mr. Ratcliffe — still you describe the inconsistencies of a madman.’

‘By no means,’ replied Ratcliffe. ‘That the imagination of this gentleman is disordered, I will not pretend to dispute; I have already told you that it has sometimes broken out into paroxysms approaching to real mental alienation. But it is of his common state of mind that I speak; it is irregular, but not deranged; the shades are as gradual as those that divide the light of noonday from midnight. The courtier who ruins his fortune for the attainment of a title which can do him no good, or power of which he can make no suitable or creditable use, the miser who hoards his useless wealth, and the prodigal who squanders it, are all marked with a certain shade of insanity. To criminals who are guilty of enormities, when the temptation, to a sober mind, bears no proportion to the horror of the act, or the probability of detection and punishment, the same observation applies; and every violent passion, as well as anger, may be termed a short madness.’

‘This may be all good philosophy, Mr. Ratcliffe,’ answered Miss Vere; ‘but, excuse me, it by no means emboldens me to visit at this late hour a person whose extravagance of imagination you yourself can only palliate.’

‘Rather, then,’ said Ratcliffe, ‘receive my solemn assurances that you do not incur the slightest danger. But what I have been hitherto afraid to mention for fear of alarming you is, that now when we are within sight of his retreat, for I can discover it through the twilight, I must go no farther with you; you must proceed alone.’

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‘Alone? I dare not.’

‘You must,’ continued Ratcliffe. ‘I will remain here and wait for you.’

‘You will not, then, stir from this place,’ said Miss Vere; ‘yet the distance is so great, you could not hear me were I to cry for assistance.’

‘Fear nothing,’ said her guide; ‘or observe, at least, the utmost caution in stifling every expression of timidity. Remember that his predominant and most harassing apprehension arises from a consciousness of the hideousness of his appearance. Your path lies straight beside yon half-fallen willow; keep the left side of it, the marsh lies on the right. Farewell for a time. Remember the evil you are threatened with, and let it overcome at once your fears and scruples.’

‘Mr. Ratcliffe,’ said Isabella, ‘farewell; if you have deceived one so unfortunate as myself, you have for ever forfeited the fair character for probity and honour to which I have trusted.’

‘On my life — on my soul,’ continued Ratcliffe, raising his voice as the distance between them increased, ‘you are safe — perfectly safe.’

CHAPTER XVI

'T was time and griefs
That framed him thus. Time, with his fairer hand,
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him. Bring us to him,
And chance it as it may.

Old Play.

THE sounds of Ratcliffe's voice had died on Isabella's ear; but, as she frequently looked back, it was some encouragement to her to discern his form, now darkening in the gloom. Ere, however, she went much farther, she lost the object in the increasing shade. The last glimmer of the twilight placed her before the hut of the Solitary. She twice extended her hand to the door, and twice she withdrew it; and when she did at length make the effort, the knock did not equal in violence the throb of her own bosom. Her next effort was louder; her third was reiterated, for the fear of not obtaining the protection from which Ratcliffe promised so much began to overpower the terrors of his presence from whom she was to request it. At length, as she still received no answer, she repeatedly called upon the Dwarf by his assumed name, and requested him to answer and open to her.

'What miserable being is reduced,' said the appalling voice of the Solitary, 'to seek refuge here? Go hence; when the heath-fowl need shelter, they seek it not in the nest of the night-raven.'

'I come to you, father,' said Isabella, 'in my hour of adversity, even as you yourself commanded, when you

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promised your heart and your door should be open to my distress; but I fear —'

'Ha!' said the Solitary, 'then thou art Isabella Vere? Give me a token that thou art she.'

'I have brought you back the rose which you gave me; it has not had time to fade ere the hard fate you foretold has come upon me!'

'And if thou hast thus redeemed thy pledge,' said the Dwarf, 'I will not forfeit mine. The heart and the door that are shut against every other earthly being *shall* be open to thee and to thy sorrows.'

She heard him move in his hut, and presently afterwards strike a light. One by one, bolt and bar were then withdrawn, the heart of Isabella throbbing higher as these obstacles to their meeting were successively removed. The door opened and the Solitary stood before her, his uncouth form and features illuminated by the iron lamp which he held in his hand.

'Enter, daughter of affliction,' he said — 'enter the house of misery.'

She entered, and observed, with a precaution which increased her trepidation, that the Recluse's first act, after setting the lamp upon the table, was to replace the numerous bolts which secured the door of his hut. She shrunk as she heard the noise which accompanied this ominous operation, yet remembered Ratcliffe's caution, and endeavoured to suppress all appearance of apprehension. The light of the lamp was weak and uncertain; but the Solitary, without taking immediate notice of Isabella, otherwise than by motioning her to sit down on a small settle beside the fireplace, made haste to kindle some dry furze, which presently cast a blaze

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through the cottage. Wooden shelves, which bore a few books, some bundles of dried herbs, and one or two wooden cups and platters, were on one side of the fire; on the other were placed some ordinary tools of field-labour, mingled with those used by mechanics. Where the bed should have been, there was a wooden frame, strewn with withered moss and rushes, the couch of the ascetic. The whole space of the cottage did not exceed ten feet by six within the walls; and its only furniture, besides what we have mentioned, was a table and two stools formed of rough deals.

Within these narrow precincts Isabella now found herself inclosed with a being whose history had nothing to reassure her, and the fearful conformation of whose hideous countenance inspired an almost superstitious terror. He occupied the seat opposite to her; and, dropping his huge and shaggy eyebrows over his piercing black eyes, gazed at her in silence, as if agitated by a variety of contending feelings. On the other side sate Isabella, pale as death, her long hair uncurled by the evening damps, and falling over her shoulders and breast, as the wet streamers droop from the mast when the storm has passed away and left the vessel stranded on the beach. The Dwarf first broke the silence with the sudden, abrupt, and alarming question — ‘Woman, what evil fate has brought thee hither?’

‘My father’s danger and your own command,’ she replied faintly, but firmly.

‘And you hope for aid from me?’

‘If you can bestow it,’ she replied, still in the same tone of mild submission.

‘And how should I possess that power?’ continued the

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Dwarf, with a bitter sneer. 'Is mine the form of a redresser of wrongs? Is this the castle in which one powerful enough to be sued to by a fair suppliant is likely to hold his residence? I but mocked thee, girl, when I said I would relieve thee.'

'Then must I depart and face my fate as I best may!'

'No!' said the Dwarf, rising and interposing between her and the door, and motioning to her sternly to resume her seat — 'no! you leave me not in this way; we must have farther conference. Why should one being desire aid of another? Why should not each be sufficient to itself? Look round you; I, the most despised and most decrepit on Nature's common, have required sympathy and help from no one. These stones are of my own piling; these utensils I framed with my own hands; and with this,' and he laid his hand with a fierce smile on the long dagger which he always wore beneath his garment, and unsheathed it so far that the blade glimmered clear in the firelight — 'with this,' he pursued, as he thrust the weapon back into the scabbard, 'I can, if necessary, defend the vital spark inclosed in this poor trunk against the fairest and strongest that shall threaten me with injury.'

It was with difficulty Isabella refrained from screaming out aloud; but she *did* refrain.

'This,' continued the Recluse, 'is the life of nature — solitary, self-sufficing, and independent. The wolf calls not the wolf to aid him in forming his den; and the vulture invites not another to assist her in striking down her prey.'

'And when they are unable to procure themselves

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support,' said Isabella, judiciously thinking that he would be most accessible to argument couched in his own metaphorical style, 'what then is to befall them?'

'Let them starve, die, and be forgotten; it is the common lot of humanity.'

'It is the lot of the wild tribes of nature,' said Isabella, 'but chiefly of those who are destined to support themselves by rapine, which brooks no partner; but it is not the law of nature in general, even the lower orders have confederacies for mutual defence. But mankind — the race would perish did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid have right to ask it of their fellow-mortals; no one who has the power of granting can refuse it without guilt.'

'And in this simple hope, poor maiden,' said the Solitary, 'thou hast come into the desert to seek one whose wish it were that the league thou hast spoken of were broken for ever, and that in very truth the whole race should perish? Wert thou not frightened?'

'Misery,' said Isabella, firmly, 'is superior to fear.'

'Hast thou not heard it said in thy mortal world that I have leagued myself with other powers, deformed to the eye and malevolent to the human race as myself? Hast thou not heard this? And dost thou seek my cell at midnight?'

'The Being I worship supports me against such idle fears,' said Isabella; but the increasing agitation of her bosom belied the affected courage which her words expressed.

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‘Ho! ho!’ said the Dwarf, ‘thou vauntest thyself a philosopher? Yet, shouldst thou not have thought of the danger of entrusting thyself, young and beautiful, in the power of one so spited against humanity as to place his chief pleasure in defacing, destroying, and degrading her fairest works?’

Isabella, much alarmed, continued to answer with firmness — ‘Whatever injuries you may have sustained in the world, you are incapable of revenging them on one who never wronged you, nor, wilfully, any other.’

‘Ay, but, maiden,’ he continued, his dark eyes flashing with an expression of malignity which communicated itself to his wild and distorted features, ‘revenge is the hungry wolf, which asks only to tear flesh and lap blood. Think you the lamb’s plea of innocence would be listened to by him?’

‘Man!’ said Isabella, rising, and expressing herself with much dignity, ‘I fear not the horrible ideas with which you would impress me. I cast them from me with disdain. Be you mortal or fiend, you would not offer injury to one who sought you as a suppliant in her utmost need. You would not — you durst not.’

‘Thou sayst truly, maiden,’ rejoined the Solitary; ‘I dare not — I would not. Begone to thy dwelling. Fear nothing with which they threaten thee. Thou hast asked my protection; thou shalt find it effectual.’

‘But, father, this very night I have consented to wed the man that I abhor, or I must put the seal to my father’s ruin.’

‘This night? at what hour?’

‘Ere midnight.’

‘And twilight,’ said the Dwarf, ‘has already passed

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away. But fear nothing, there is ample time to protect thee.'

'And my father?' continued Isabella, in a suppliant tone.

'Thy father,' replied the Dwarf, 'has been, and is, my most bitter enemy. But fear not; thy virtue shall save him. And now, begone; were I to keep thee longer by me I might again fall into the stupid dreams concerning human worth from which I have been so fearfully awakened. But fear nothing; at the very foot of the altar I will redeem thee. Adieu, time presses, and I must act!'

He led her to the door of the hut, which he opened for her departure. She remounted her horse, which had been feeding in the outer inclosure, and pressed him forward by the light of the moon, which was now rising, to the spot where she had left Ratcliffe.

'Have you succeeded?' was his first eager question.

'I have obtained promises from him to whom you sent me; but how can he possibly accomplish them?'

'Thank God!' said Ratcliffe; 'doubt not his power to fulfil his promise.'

At this moment a shrill whistle was heard to resound along the heath.

'Hark!' said Ratcliffe, 'he calls me. Miss Vere, return home, and leave unbolted the postern-door of the garden; to that which opens on the backstairs I have a private key.'

A second whistle was heard, yet more shrill and prolonged than the first.

'I come, I come,' said Ratcliffe; and, setting spurs to his horse, rode over the heath in the direction of the

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Recluse's hut. Miss Vere returned to the castle, the mettle of the animal on which she rode, and her own anxiety of mind, combining to accelerate her journey.

She obeyed Ratcliffe's directions, though without well apprehending their purpose, and, leaving her horse at large in a paddock near the garden, hurried to her own apartment, which she reached without observation. She now unbolted her door, and rang her bell for lights. Her father appeared along with the servant who answered her summons.

'He had been twice,' he said, 'listening at her door during the two hours that had elapsed since he left her, and not hearing her speak, had become apprehensive that she was taken ill.'

'And now, my dear father,' she said, 'permit me to claim the promise you so kindly gave; let the last moments of freedom which I am to enjoy be mine without interruption; and protract to the last moment the respite which is allowed me.'

'I will,' said her father; 'nor shall you be again interrupted. But this disordered dress — this dishevelled hair! do not let me find you thus when I call on you again; the sacrifice, to be beneficial, must be voluntary.'

'Must it be so?' she replied; 'then fear not, my father! the victim shall be adorned.'

CHAPTER XVII

This looks not like a nuptial.

Much Ado About Nothing.

THE chapel in the Castle of Ellieslaw, destined to be the scene of this ill-omened union, was a building of much older date than the castle itself, though that claimed considerable antiquity. Before the wars between England and Scotland had become so common and of such long duration that the buildings along both sides of the Border were chiefly dedicated to warlike purposes, there had been a small settlement of monks at Ellieslaw, a dependency, it is believed by antiquaries, on the rich abbey of Jedburgh. Their possessions had long passed away under the changes introduced by war and mutual ravage. A feudal castle had arisen on the ruin of their cells, and their chapel was included in its precincts.

The edifice, in its round arches and massive pillars, the simplicity of which referred their date to what has been called the Saxon architecture, presented at all times a dark and sombre appearance, and had been frequently used as the cemetery of the family of the feudal lords, as well as formerly of the monastic brethren. But it looked doubly gloomy by the effect of the few and smoky torches which were used to enlighten it on the present occasion, and which, spreading a glare of yellow light in their immediate vicinity, were surrounded beyond by a red and purple halo reflected from their own smoke, and beyond that again by a zone of

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darkness which magnified the extent of the chapel, while it rendered it impossible for the eye to ascertain its limits. Some injudicious ornaments, adopted in haste for the occasion, rather added to the dreariness of the scene. Old fragments of tapestry, torn from the walls of other apartments, had been hastily and partially disposed around those of the chapel, and mingled inconsistently with scutcheons and funeral emblems of the dead, which they elsewhere exhibited. On each side of the stone altar was a monument, the appearance of which formed an equally strange contrast. On the one was the figure, in stone, of some grim hermit or monk who had died in the odour of sanctity; he was represented as recumbent, in his cowl and scapular, with his face turned upward as in the act of devotion, and his hands folded, from which his string of beads was dependent. On the other side was a tomb, in the Italian taste, composed of the most beautiful statuary marble, and accounted a model of modern art. It was erected to the memory of Isabella's mother, the late Mrs. Vere of Ellieslaw, who was represented as in a dying posture, while a weeping cherub, with eyes averted, seemed in the act of extinguishing a dying lamp as emblematic of her speedy dissolution. It was indeed, a masterpiece of art, but misplaced in the rude vault to which it had been consigned. Many were surprised, and even scandalised, that Ellieslaw, not remarkable for attention to his lady while alive, should erect after her death such a costly mausoleum in affected sorrow; others cleared him from the imputation of hypocrisy, and averred that the monument had been constructed under the direction and at the sole expense of Mr. Ratcliffe.

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Before these monuments the wedding guests were assembled. They were few in number; for many had left the castle to prepare for the ensuing political explosion, and Ellieslaw was, in the circumstances of the case, far from being desirous to extend invitations farther than to those near relations whose presence the custom of the country rendered indispensable. Next to the altar stood Sir Frederick Langley, dark, moody, and thoughtful even beyond his wont, and near him Mareschal, who was to play the part of bridesman, as it was called. The thoughtless humour of this young gentleman, on which he never deigned to place the least restraint, added to the cloud which overhung the brow of the bridegroom.

‘The bride is not yet come out of her chamber,’ he whispered to Sir Frederick; ‘I trust that we must not have recourse to the violent expedients of the Romans which I read of at college. It would be hard upon my pretty cousin to be run away with twice in two days, though I know none better worth such a violent compliment.’

Sir Frederick attempted to turn a deaf ear to this discourse, humming a tune and looking another way; but Mareschal proceeded in the same wild manner. ‘This delay is hard upon Dr. Hobbler, who was disturbed to accelerate preparations for this joyful event when he had successfully extracted the cork of his third bottle. I hope you will keep him free of the censure of his superiors, for I take it this is beyond canonical hours. But here come Ellieslaw and my pretty cousin — prettier than ever, I think, were it not she seems so faint and so deadly pale. Hark ye, Sir Knight, if she says not

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YES with right good-will, it shall be no wedding, for all that has come and gone yet.'

'No wedding, sir?' returned Sir Frederick, in a loud whisper, the tone of which indicated that his angry feelings were suppressed with difficulty.

'No; no marriage,' replied Mareschal. 'There's my hand and glove on't.'

Sir Frederick Langley took his hand, and, as he wrung it hard, said in a lower whisper, 'Mareschal, you shall answer this,' and then flung his hand from him.

'That I will readily do,' said Mareschal, 'for never word escaped my lips that my hand was not ready to guarantee. So, speak up, my pretty cousin, and tell me if it be your free will and unbiassed resolution to accept of this gallant knight for your lord and husband; for if you have the tenth part of a scruple upon the subject, fall back, fall edge, he shall not have you.'

'Are you mad, Mr. Mareschal?' said Ellieslaw, who, having been this young man's guardian during his minority, often employed a tone of authority to him. 'Do you suppose I would drag my daughter to the foot of the altar, were it not her own choice?'

'Tut, Ellieslaw,' retorted the young gentleman, 'never tell me of the contrary; her eyes are full of tears, and her cheeks are whiter than her white dress. I must insist, in the name of common humanity, that the ceremony be adjourned till to-morrow.'

'She shall tell you herself, thou incorrigible intermeddler in what concerns thee not, that it is her wish the ceremony should go on. Is it not, Isabella, my dear?'

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‘It is,’ said Isabella, half-fainting, ‘since there is no help either in God or man.’

The first word alone was distinctly audible. Mareschal shrugged up his shoulders and stepped back. Ellieslaw led, or rather supported, his daughter to the altar. Sir Frederick moved forward and placed himself by her side. The clergyman opened his prayer-book, and looked to Mr. Vere for the signal to commence the service.

‘Proceed,’ said the latter.

But a voice, as if issuing from the tomb of his deceased wife, called, in such loud and harsh accents as awakened every echo in the vaulted chapel, ‘Forbear!’

All were mute and motionless, till a distant rustle and the clash of swords, or something resembling it, was heard from the remote apartments. It ceased almost instantly.

‘What new device is this?’ said Sir Frederick fiercely, eyeing Ellieslaw and Mareschal with a glance of malignant suspicion.

‘It can be but the frolic of some intemperate guest,’ said Ellieslaw, though greatly confounded; ‘we must make large allowances for the excess of this evening’s festivity. Proceed with the service.’

Before the clergyman could obey, the same prohibition which they had before heard was repeated from the same spot. The female attendants screamed and fled from the chapel; the gentlemen laid their hands on their swords. Ere the first moment of surprise had passed by, the Dwarf stepped from behind the monument, and placed himself full in front of Mr. Vere. The effect of so strange and hideous an apparition in such a place, and

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in such circumstances, appalled all present, but seemed to annihilate the Laird of Ellieslaw, who, dropping his daughter's arm, staggered against the nearest pillar, and, clasping it with his hands as if for support, laid his brow against the column.

'Who is this fellow,' said Sir Frederick; 'and what does he mean by this intrusion?'

'It is one who comes to tell you,' said the Dwarf, with the peculiar acrimony which usually marked his manner, 'that in marrying that young lady you wed neither the heiress of Ellieslaw, nor of Mauley Hall, nor of Polverton, nor of one furrow of land, unless she marries with MY consent; and to thee that consent shall never be given. Down — down on thy knees, and thank Heaven that thou art prevented from wedding qualities with which thou hast no concern — portionless truth, virtue, and innocence. And thou, base ingrate,' he continued, addressing himself to Ellieslaw, 'what is thy wretched subterfuge now? Thou, who wouldst sell thy daughter to relieve thee from danger, as in famine thou wouldst have slain and devoured her to preserve thy own vile life! Ay, hide thy face with thy hands; well mayst thou blush to look on him whose body thou didst consign to chains, his hand to guilt, and his soul to misery. Saved once more by the virtue of her who calls thee father, go hence, and may the pardon and benefits I confer on thee prove literal coals of fire, till thy brain is seared and scorched like mine!'

Ellieslaw left the chapel with a gesture of mute despair.

'Follow him, Hubert Ratcliffe,' said the Dwarf, 'and inform him of his destiny. He will rejoice, for to breathe air and to handle gold is to him happiness.'

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‘I understand nothing of all this,’ said Sir Frederick Langley. ‘But we are here a body of gentlemen in arms and authority for King James; and whether you really, sir, be that Sir Edward Mauley who has been so long supposed dead in confinement, or whether you be an impostor assuming his name and title, we will use the freedom of detaining you till your appearance here, at this moment, is better accounted for; we will have no spies among us. Seize on him, my friends.’

But the domestics shrunk back in doubt and alarm. Sir Frederick himself stepped forward towards the Recluse, as if to lay hands on his person, when his progress was suddenly stopped by the glittering point of a parti-zan, which the sturdy hand of Hobbie Elliot presented against his bosom.

‘I’ll gar daylight shine through ye if ye offer to steer him!’ said the stout Borderer; ‘stand back, or I’ll strike ye through! Naebody shall lay a finger on Elshie; he’s a canny neighbourly man, aye ready to make a friend help; and, though ye may think him a lamiter, yet, grippie for grippie, friend, I’ll wad a wether he’ll make the bluid spin frae under your nails. He’s a teugh carle, Elshie! he grips like a smith’s vice.’

‘What has brought you here, Elliot?’ said Mareschal; ‘who called on you for interference?’

‘Troth, Mareschal Wells,’ answered Hobbie, ‘I am just come here, wi’ twenty or thretty mair o’ us, in my ain name and the King’s — or Queen’s, ca’ they her? — and Canny Elshie’s into the bargain, to keep the peace, and pay back some ill-usage Ellieslaw has gien me. A bonny breakfast the loons gae me the ither morning, and him at the bottom on’t; and trow ye I wasna ready

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to supper him up? Ye needna lay your hands on your swords, gentlemen, the house is ours wi' little din; for the doors were open, and there had been ower muckle punch amang your folk; we took their swords and pistols as easily as ye wad shiel peacods.'

Mareschal rushed out, and immediately reëntered the chapel.

'By Heaven! it is true, Sir Frederick; the house is filled with armed men, and our drunken beasts are all disarmed. Draw, and let us fight our way.'

'Binna rash — binna rash,' exclaimed Hobbie; 'hear me a bit — hear me a bit. We mean ye nae harm; but, as ye are in arms for King James, as ye ca' him, and the prelates, we thought it right to keep up the auld neighbour war, and stand up for the t'other ane and the Kirk; but we'll no hurt a hair o' your heads if ye like to gang hame quietly. And it will be your best way, for there's sure news come frae Loudoun that him they ca' Bang, or Byng, or what is't, has bang'd the French ships and the new king aff the coast however; sae ye had best bide content wi' auld Nanse for want of a better queen.'

Ratcliffe, who at this moment entered, confirmed these accounts so unfavourable to the Jacobite interest. Sir Frederick almost instantly, and without taking leave of any one, left the castle, with such of his attendants as were able to follow him.

'And what will you do, Mr. Mareschal?' said Ratcliffe.

'Why, faith,' answered he, smiling, 'I hardly know; my spirit is too great, and my fortune too small, for me to follow the example of the doughty bridegroom. It is not in my nature, and it is hardly worth my while.'

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‘Well, then, disperse your men and remain quiet, and this will be overlooked, as there has been no overt act.’

‘Hout, ay,’ said Elliot, ‘just let byganes be byganes, and a’ friends again; deil ane I bear malice at but Westburnflat, and I hae gien him baith a het skin and a cauld ane. I hadna changed three blows of the broadsword wi’ him before he lap the window into the castle moat, and swattered through it like a wild duck. He’s a clever fallow, indeed! maun kilt awa wi’ ae bonny lass in the morning and another at night, less wadna serve him! but if he disna kilt himsell out o’ the country, I’s e kilt him wi’ a tow, for the Castleton meeting’s clean blawn ower; his friends will no countenance him.’

During the general confusion Isabella had thrown herself at the feet of her kinsman, Sir Edward Mauley, for so we must now call the Solitary, to express at once her gratitude and to beseech forgiveness for her father. The eyes of all began to be fixed on them, as soon as their own agitation and the bustle of the attendants had somewhat abated. Miss Vere kneeled beside the tomb of her mother, to whose statue her features exhibited a marked resemblance. She held the hand of the Dwarf, which she kissed repeatedly and bathed with tears. He stood fixed and motionless, excepting that his eyes glanced alternately on the marble figure and the living suppliant. At length the large drops which gathered on his eyelashes compelled him to draw his hand across them.

‘I thought,’ he said, ‘that tears and I had done; but we shed them at our birth and their spring dries not until we are in our graves. But no melting of the heart shall dissolve my resolution. I part here, at once and

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for ever, with all of which the memory (looking to the tomb) or the presence (he pressed Isabella's hand) is dear to me. Speak not to me! attempt not to thwart my determination! it will avail nothing; you will hear of and see this lump of deformity no more. To you I shall be dead ere I am actually in my grave, and you will think of me as of a friend disencumbered from the toils and crimes of existence.'

He kissed Isabella on the forehead, impressed another kiss on the brow of the statue by which she knelt, and left the chapel, followed by Ratcliffe. Isabella, almost exhausted by the emotions of the day, was carried to her apartment by her women. Most of the other guests dispersed, after having separately endeavoured to impress on all who would listen to them their disapprobation of the plots formed against the government, or their regret for having engaged in them. Hobbie Elliot assumed the command of the castle for the night and mounted a regular guard. He boasted not a little of the alacrity with which his friends and he had obeyed a hasty summons received from Elshie through the faithful Ratcliffe. And it was a lucky chance, he said, that on that very day they had got notice that Westburnflat did not intend to keep his tryste at Castleton, but to hold them at defiance; so that a considerable party had assembled at the Heughfoot with the intention of paying a visit to the robber's tower on the ensuing morning, and their course was easily directed to Ellieslaw Castle.

CHAPTER XVIII

Last scene of all.
To close this strange eventful history.

As You Like It.

ON the next morning Mr. Ratcliffe presented Miss Vere with a letter from her father, of which the following is the tenor: —

MY DEAREST CHILD,

The malice of a persecuting government will compel me, for my own safety, to retreat abroad, and to remain for some time in foreign parts. I do not ask you to accompany or follow me; you will attend to my interest and your own more effectually by remaining where you are. It is unnecessary to enter into a minute detail concerning the causes of the strange events which yesterday took place. I think I have reason to complain of the usage I have received from Sir Edward Mauley, who is your nearest kinsman by the mother's side; but, as he has declared you his heir and is to put you in immediate possession of a large part of his fortune, I account it a full atonement. I am aware he has never forgiven the preference which your mother gave to my addresses, instead of complying with the terms of a sort of family compact, which absurdly and tyrannically destined her to wed her deformed relative. The shock was even sufficient to unsettle his wits (which, indeed, were never over-well arranged), and I had, as the husband of his

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nearest kinswoman and heir, the delicate task of taking care of his person and property until he was reinstated in the management of the latter by those who, no doubt, thought they were doing him justice; although, if some parts of his subsequent conduct be examined, it will appear that he ought, for his own sake, to have been left under the influence of a mild and salutary restraint.

In one particular, however, he showed a sense of the ties of blood, as well as of his own frailty; for, while he sequestered himself closely from the world, under various names and disguises, and insisted on spreading a report of his own death (in which, to gratify him, I willingly acquiesced), he left at my disposal the rents of a great proportion of his estates, and especially all those which, having belonged to your mother, reverted to him as a male fief. In this he may have thought that he was acting with extreme generosity, while in the opinion of all impartial men he will only be considered as having fulfilled a natural obligation, seeing that, in justice if not in strict law, you must be considered as the heir of your mother, and I as your legal administrator. Instead, therefore, of considering myself as loaded with obligations to Sir Edward on this account, I think I had reason to complain that these remittances were only doled out to me at the pleasure of Mr. Ratcliffe, who, moreover, exacted from me mortgages over my paternal estate of Ellieslaw for any sums which I required as an extra advance; and thus may be said to have insinuated himself into the absolute management and control of my property. Or, if all this seeming friendship was employed by Sir Edward for the purpose of obtaining a complete command of my affairs, and acquiring the

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power of ruining me at his pleasure, I feel myself, I must repeat, still less bound by the alleged obligation.

About the autumn of last year, as I understand, either his own crazed imagination or the accomplishment of some such scheme as I have hinted brought him down to this country. His alleged motive, it seems, was a desire of seeing a monument which he had directed to be raised in the chapel over the tomb of your mother. Mr. Ratcliffe, who at this time had done me the honour to make my house his own, had the complaisance to introduce him secretly into the chapel. The consequence, as he informs me, was a frenzy of several hours, during which he fled into the neighbouring moors, in one of the wildest spots of which he chose, when he was somewhat recovered, to fix his mansion, and set up for a sort of country empiric, a character which, even in his best days, he was fond of assuming. It is remarkable that, instead of informing me of these circumstances, that I might have had the relative of my late wife taken such care of as his calamitous condition required, Mr. Ratcliffe seems to have had such culpable indulgence for his irregular plans as to promise, and even swear, secrecy concerning them. He visited Sir Edward often, and assisted in the fantastic task he had taken upon him of constructing a hermitage. Nothing they appear to have dreaded more than a discovery of their intercourse.

The ground was open in every direction around, and a small subterranean cave, probably sepulchral, which their researches had detected near the great granite pillar, served to conceal Ratcliffe when any one approached his master. I think you will be of opinion, my love, that this secrecy must have had some strong mo-

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tive. It is also remarkable that, while I thought my unhappy friend was residing among the monks of La Trappe, he should have been actually living for many months in this bizarre disguise within five miles of my house, and obtaining regular information of my most private movements, either by Ratcliffe or through Westburnflat or others, whom he had the means to bribe to any extent. He makes it a crime against me that I endeavoured to establish your marriage with Sir Frederick. I acted for the best; but if Sir Edward Mauley thought otherwise, why did he not step manfully forward, express his own purpose of becoming a party to the settlements, and take that interest which he is entitled to claim in you as heir to his great property?

Even now, though your rash and eccentric relation is somewhat tardy in announcing his purpose, I am far from opposing my authority against his wishes, although the person he desires you to regard as your future husband be young Earnscliff, the very last whom I should have thought likely to be acceptable to him, considering a certain fatal event. But I give my free and hearty consent, providing the settlements are drawn in such an irrevocable form as may secure my child from suffering by that state of dependence, and that sudden and causeless revocation of allowances, of which I have so much reason to complain. Of Sir Frederick Langley, I augur, you will hear no more. He is not likely to claim the hand of a dowerless maiden. I therefore commit you, my dear Isabella, to the wisdom of Providence and to your own prudence, begging you to lose no time in securing those advantages which the fickleness of your kinsman has withdrawn from me to shower upon you.

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Mr. Ratcliffe mentioned Sir Edward's intention to settle a considerable sum upon me yearly for my maintenance in foreign parts; but this my heart is too proud to accept from him. I told him I had a dear child, who, while in affluence herself, would never suffer me to be in poverty. I thought it right to intimate this to him pretty roundly, that, whatever increase be settled upon you, it may be calculated so as to cover this necessary and natural encumbrance. I shall willingly settle upon you the castle and manor of Ellieslaw, to show my parental affection and disinterested zeal for promoting your settlement in life. The annual interest of debts charged on the estate somewhat exceeds the income, even after a reasonable rent has been put upon the mansion and mains. But as all the debts are in the person of Mr. Ratcliffe, as your kinsman's trustee, he will not be a troublesome creditor. And here I must make you aware that, though I have to complain of Mr. Ratcliffe's conduct to me personally, I nevertheless, believe him a just and upright man, with whom you may safely consult on your affairs, not to mention that to cherish his good opinion will be the best way to retain that of your kinsman. Remember me to Marchie. I hope he will not be troubled on account of late matters. I will write more fully from the Continent. Meanwhile, I rest your loving father,

RICHARD VERE.

The above letter throws the only additional light which we have been able to procure upon the earlier part of our story. It was Hobbie's opinion, and may be that of most of our readers, that the Recluse of Mucklestane Moor had but a kind of a gloaming or twilight

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understanding; and that he had neither very clear views as to what he himself wanted nor was apt to pursue his ends by the clearest and most direct means; so that to seek the clue of his conduct was likened by Hobbie to looking for a straight path through a common over which are a hundred devious tracks, but not one distinct line of road.

When Isabella had perused the letter her first inquiry was after her father. He had left the castle, she was informed, early in the morning, after a long interview with Mr. Ratcliffe, and was already far on his way to the next port, where he might expect to find shipping for the Continent.

‘Where was Sir Edward Mauley?’

No one had seen the Dwarf since the eventful scene of the preceding evening.

‘Od, if ony thing has befa’en puir Elshie,’ said Hobbie Elliot, ‘I wad rather I were harried ower again.’

He immediately rode to his dwelling, and the remaining she-goat came bleating to meet him, for her milking time was long past. The Solitary was nowhere to be seen; his door, contrary to wont, was open, his fire extinguished, and the whole hut was left in the state which it exhibited on Isabella’s visit to him. It was pretty clear that the means of conveyance which had brought the Dwarf to Ellieslaw on the preceding evening had removed him from it to some other place of abode. Hobbie returned disconsolate to the castle.

‘I am doubting we hae lost Canny Elshie for gude an’ a’.’

‘You have indeed,’ said Ratcliffe, producing a paper, which he put into Hobbie’s hands; ‘but read that and

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you will perceive you have been no loser by having known him.'

It was a short deed of gift, by which 'Sir Edward Mauley, otherwise called Elshender the Recluse, endowed Halbert or Hobbie Elliot and Grace Armstrong in full property with a considerable sum borrowed by Elliot from him.'

Hobbie's joy was mingled with feelings which brought tears down his rough cheeks.

'It's a queer thing,' he said; 'but I canna joy in the gear unless I kend the puir body was happy that gave it me.'

'Next to enjoying happiness ourselves,' said Ratcliffe, 'is the consciousness of having bestowed it on others. Had all my master's benefits been conferred like the present, what a different return would they have produced! But the indiscriminate profusion that would glut avarice or supply prodigality neither does good nor is rewarded by gratitude. It is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind.'

'And that wad be a light har'st,' said Hobbie; 'but, wi' my young leddie's leave, I wad fain take down Elshie's skeps o' bees and set them in Grace's bit flower-yard at the Heughfoot: they shall ne'er be smeekit by ony o' huz. And the puir goat, she would be negleckit about a great toun like this; and she could feed bonnily on our lily lea by the burn side, and the hounds wad ken her in a day's time and never fash her, and Grace wad milk her ilka morning wi' her ain hand, for Elshie's sake; for, though he was thrawn and cankered in his converse, he likeit dumb creatures weel.'

Hobbie's requests were readily granted, not without

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some wonder at the natural delicacy of feeling which pointed out to him this mode of displaying his gratitude. He was delighted when Ratcliffe informed him that his benefactor should not remain ignorant of the care which he took of his favourite.

‘And mind be sure and tell him that grannie and the titties, and, abune a’ Grace and mysell, are weel and thriving, and that it’s a’ his doing; that canna but please him, ane wad think.’

And Elliot and the family at Heughfoot were, and continued to be, as fortunate and happy as his undaunted honesty, tenderness, and gallantry so well merited.

All bar between the marriage of Earnscliff and Isabella was now removed, and the settlements which Ratcliffe produced on the part of Sir Edward Mauley might have satisfied the cupidity of Ellieslaw himself. But Miss Vere and Ratcliffe thought it unnecessary to mention to Earnscliff that one great motive of Sir Edward, in thus loading the young pair with benefits, was to expiate his having, many years before, shed the blood of his father in a hasty brawl. If it be true, as Ratcliffe asserted, that the Dwarf’s extreme misanthropy seemed to relax somewhat under the consciousness of having diffused happiness among so many, the recollection of this circumstance might probably be one of his chief motives for refusing obstinately ever to witness their state of contentment.

Mareschal hunted, shot, and drank claret, tired of the country, went abroad, served three campaigns, came home, and married Lucy Ilderton.

Years fled over the heads of Earnscliff and his wife,

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and found and left them contented and happy. The scheming ambition of Sir Frederick Langley engaged him in the unfortunate insurrection of 1715. He was made prisoner at Preston, in Lancashire, with the Earl of Derwentwater and others. His defence, and the dying speech which he made at his execution, may be found in the 'State Trials.' Mr. Vere, supplied by his daughter with an ample income, continued to reside abroad, engaged deeply in the affair of Law's bank during the regency of the Duke of Orleans, and was at one time supposed to be immensely rich. But, on the bursting of that famous bubble, he was so much chagrined at being again reduced to a moderate annuity (although he saw thousands of his companions in misfortune absolutely starving) that vexation of mind brought on a paralytic stroke, of which he died, after lingering under its effects a few weeks.

Willie of Westburnflat fled from the wrath of Hobbie Elliot, as his betters did from the pursuit of the law. His patriotism urged him to serve his country abroad, while his reluctance to leave his native soil pressed him rather to remain in the beloved island and collect purses, watches, and rings on the highroads at home. Fortunately for him, the first impulse prevailed, and he joined the army under Marlborough; obtained a commission, to which he was recommended by his services in collecting cattle for the commissariat; returned home after many years with some money (how come by, Heaven only knows); demolished the peel-house at Westburnflat and built in its stead a high narrow 'on-stand' of three stories, with a chimney at each end; drank brandy with the neighbours whom in his younger

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days he had plundered; died in his bed, and is recorded upon his tombstone at Kirkwhistle (still extant) as having played all the parts of a brave soldier, a discreet neighbour, and a sincere Christian.

Mr. Ratcliffe resided usually with the family at Ellieslaw, but regularly every spring and autumn he absented himself for about a month. On the direction and purpose of his periodical journey he remained steadily silent; but it was well understood that he was then in attendance on his unfortunate patron. At length, on his return from one of these visits, his grave countenance and deep mourning dress announced to the Ellieslaw family that their benefactor was no more. Sir Edward's death made no addition to their fortune, for he had divested himself of his property during his lifetime, and chiefly in their favour. Ratcliffe, his sole confidant, died at a good old age, but without ever naming the place to which his master had finally retired, or the manner of his death, or the place of his burial. It was supposed that on all these particulars his patron had enjoined him strict secrecy.

The sudden disappearance of Elshie from his extraordinary hermitage corroborated the reports which the common people had spread concerning him. Many believed that, having ventured to enter a consecrated building, contrary to his paction with the Evil One, he had been bodily carried off while on his return to his cottage; but most are of opinion that he only disappeared for a season, and continues to be seen from time to time among the hills. And retaining, according to custom, a more vivid recollection of his wild and desperate language than of the benevolent tendency of most of

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his actions, he is usually identified with the malignant demon called the Man of the Moors, whose feats were quoted by Mrs. Elliot to her grandsons; and, accordingly, is generally represented as bewitching the sheep, causing the ewes to 'keb,' that is, to cast their lambs, or seen loosening the impending wreath of snow to precipitate its weight on such as take shelter during the storm beneath the bank of a torrent or under the shelter of a deep glen. In short, the evils most dreaded and deprecated by the inhabitants of that pastoral country are ascribed to the agency of the BLACK DWARF.

END OF THE BLACK DWARF

NOTES AND GLOSSARY

NOTES TO THE ANTIQUARY

NOTE 1, p. 105

THE doctrine of Monkbarns on the origin of imprisonment for civil debt in Scotland may appear somewhat whimsical, but was referred to, and admitted to be correct, by the Bench of the Supreme Scottish Court on 5th December, 1828, in the case of *Thom v. Black*. In fact, the Scottish law is in this particular more jealous of the personal liberty of the subject than any other code in Europe.

NOTE 2, p. 113

The great battle of Harlaw, here and formerly referred to, might be said to determine whether the Gaelic or the Saxon race should be predominant in Scotland. Donald, Lord of the Isles, who had at that period the power of an independent sovereign, laid claim to the Earldom of Ross during the Regency of Robert, Duke of Albany. To enforce his supposed right, he ravaged the north with a large army of Highlanders and Islesmen. He was encountered at Harlaw, in the Garioch, by Alexander, Earl of Mar, at the head of the northern nobility and gentry of Saxon and Norman descent. The battle was bloody and indecisive; but the invader was obliged to retire in consequence of the loss he sustained, and afterwards was compelled to make submission to the Regent, and renounce his pretensions to Ross; so that all the advantages of the field were gained by the Saxons. The battle of Harlaw was fought 24th July, 1411.

NOTE 3, p. 117

The concluding circumstance of Elspeth's death is taken from an incident said to have happened at the funeral of John, Duke of Roxburghe. All who were acquainted with that accomplished nobleman must remember that he was not more remarkable for creating and possessing a most curious and splendid library than for his acquaintance with the literary treasures it contained. In arranging his books, fetching and replacing the volumes which he wanted, and carrying on all the necessary intercourse which a man of letters holds with his library, it was the Duke's custom to

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employ, not a secretary or librarian, but a livery servant, called Archie, whom habit had made so perfectly acquainted with the library that he knew every book, as a shepherd does the individuals of his flock, by what is called head-mark, and could bring his master whatever volume he wanted, and afford all the mechanical aid the Duke required in his literary researches. To secure the attendance of Archie, there was a bell hung in his room, which was used on no occasion except to call him individually to the Duke's study.

His Grace died in St. James's Square, London, in the year 1804; the body was to be conveyed to Scotland, to lie in state at his mansion of Fleurs, and to be removed from thence to the family burial-place at Bowden.

At this time Archie, who had been long attacked by a liver-complaint, was in the very last stage of that disease. Yet he prepared himself to accompany the body of the master whom he had so long and so faithfully waited upon. The medical persons assured him he could not survive the journey. It signified nothing, he said, whether he died in England or Scotland; he was resolved to assist in rendering the last honours to the kind master from whom he had been inseparable for so many years, even if he should expire in the attempt. The poor invalid was permitted to attend the Duke's body to Scotland; but when they reached Fleurs he was totally exhausted, and obliged to keep his bed, in a sort of stupor which announced speedy dissolution. On the morning of the day fixed for removing the dead body of the Duke to the place of burial, the private bell by which he was wont to summon his attendant to his study was rung violently. This might easily happen in the confusion of such a scene, although the people of the neighbourhood prefer believing that the bell sounded of its own accord. Ring, however, it did; and Archie, roused by the well-known summons, rose up in his bed, and faltered, in broken accents, 'Yes, my Lord Duke — yes; I will wait on your Grace instantly'; and with these words on his lips he is said to have fallen back and expired.

NOTE 4, p. 173

The story of the false alarm at Fairport, and the consequences, are taken from a real incident. Those who witnessed the state of Britain, and of Scotland in particular, from the period that succeeded the war which commenced in 1803 to the battle of Tra-

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falgar must recollect those times with feelings which we can hardly hope to make the rising generation comprehend. Almost every individual was enrolled either in a military or civil capacity for the purpose of contributing to resist the long-suspended threats of invasion which were echoed from every quarter. Beacons were erected along the coast and all through the country, to give the signal for every one to repair to the post where his peculiar duty called him, and men of every description fit to serve held themselves in readiness on the shortest summons. During this agitating period, and on the evening of the 2d February, 1804, the person who kept watch on the commanding station of Home Castle, being deceived by some accidental fire in the country of Northumberland, which he took for the corresponding signal-light in that country with which his orders were to communicate, lighted up his own beacon. The signal was immediately repeated through all the valleys on the English Border. If the beacon at St. Abb's Head had been fired, the alarm would have run northward and roused all Scotland. But the watch at this important point judiciously considered that, if there had been an actual or threatened descent on our eastern sea-coast, the alarm would have come along the coast, and not from the interior of the country.

Through the Border counties the alarm spread with rapidity, and on no occasion when that country was the scene of perpetual and unceasing war was the summons to arms more readily obeyed. In Berwickshire, Roxburghshire, and Selkirkshire the volunteers and militia got under arms with a degree of rapidity and alacrity which, considering the distance individuals lived from each other, had something in it very surprising; they poured to the alarm-posts on the sea-coast in a state so well armed and so completely appointed, with baggage, provisions, etc., as was accounted by the best military judges to render them fit for instant and effectual service.

There were some particulars in the general alarm which are curious and interesting. The men of Liddesdale, the most remote point to the westward which the alarm reached, were so much afraid of being late in the field that they put in requisition all the horses they could find, and when they had thus made a forced march out of their own country, they turned their borrowed steeds loose to find their way back through the hills, and they all got back safe to their own stables. Another remarkable circumstance was the general cry of the inhabitants of the smaller towns for

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arms, that they might go along with their companions. The Selkirkshire Yeomanry made a remarkable march, for, although some of the individuals lived at twenty and thirty miles' distance from the place where they mustered, they were nevertheless embodied and in order in so short a period that they were at Dalkeith, which was their alarm-post, about one o'clock on the day succeeding the first signal, with men and horses in good order, though the roads were in a bad state, and many of the troopers must have ridden forty or fifty miles without drawing bridle. Two members of the corps chanced to be absent from their homes, and in Edinburgh on private business. The lately married wife of one of these gentlemen, and the widowed mother of the other, sent the arms, uniforms and chargers of the two troopers that they might join their companions at Dalkeith. The Author was very much struck by the answer made to him by the last-mentioned lady, when he paid her some compliment on the readiness which she showed in equipping her son with the means of meeting danger, when she might have left him a fair excuse for remaining absent. 'Sir,' she replied, with the spirit of a Roman matron, 'none can know better than you that my son is the only prop by which, since his father's death, our family is supported. But I would rather see him dead on that hearth than hear that he had been a horse's length behind his companions in the defence of his king and country.' The Author mentions what was immediately under his own eye and within his own knowledge; but the spirit was universal, wherever the alarm reached, both in Scotland and England.

The account of the ready patriotism displayed by the country on this occasion warmed the hearts of Scottish men in every corner of the world. It reached the ears of the well-known Dr. Leyden, whose enthusiastic love of Scotland, and of his own district of Teviotdale, formed a distinguished part of his character. The account, which was read to him when on a sick-bed, stated (very truly) that the different corps, on arriving at their alarm-posts, announced themselves by their music playing the tunes peculiar to their own districts, many of which have been gathering-signals for centuries. It was particularly remembered that the Liddesdale men before mentioned entered Kelso playing the lively tune—

O wha dare meddle wi' me,
And wha dare meddle wi' me!
My name it is little Jock Elliot,
And wha dare meddle wi' me!

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The patient was so delighted with this display of ancient Border spirit that he sprung up in his bed and began to sing the old song with such vehemence of action and voice that his attendants, ignorant of the cause of excitation, concluded that the fever had taken possession of his brain; and it was only the entry of another Borderer, Sir John Malcolm, and the explanation which he was well qualified to give, that prevented them from resorting to means of medical coercion.

The circumstances of this false alarm, and its consequences, may be now held of too little importance even for a note upon a work of fiction; but at the period when it happened it was hailed by the country as a propitious omen that the national force, to which much must naturally have been trusted, had the spirit to look in the face the danger which they had taken arms to repel; and every one was convinced that, on whichever side God might bestow the victory, the invaders would meet with the most determined opposition from the children of the soil.

NOTES TO THE BLACK DWARF

NOTE 1, p. 198

WE have, in this and other instances, printed in italics some few words which the worthy editor, Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, seems to have interpolated upon the text of his deceased friend, Mr. Pattieson. We must observe, once for all, that such liberties seem only to have been taken by the learned gentleman where his own character and conduct are concerned; and surely he must be the best judge of the style in which his own character and conduct should be treated of.

NOTE 2, p. 201

The Black Dwarf, now almost forgotten, was once held a formidable personage by the dalesmen of the Border, where he got the blame of whatever mischief befell the sheep or cattle. 'He was,' says Dr. Leyden, who makes considerable use of him in the ballad called the 'Cout of Keeldar,' 'a fairy of the most malignant order — the genuine Northern Duergar.' The best and most authentic account of this dangerous and mysterious being occurs in a tale communicated to the author by that eminent antiquary, Richard Surtees, Esq., of Mainsforth, author of the *History of the Bishopric of Durham*.

According to this well-attested legend, two young Northumbrians were out on a shooting party, and had plunged deep among the mountainous moorlands which border on Cumberland. They stopped for refreshment in a little secluded dell by the side of a rivulet. There, after they had partaken of such food as they brought with them, one of the party fell asleep; the other, unwilling to disturb his friend's repose, stole silently out of the dell with the purpose of looking around him, when he was astonished to find himself close to a being who seemed not to belong to this world, as he was the most hideous dwarf that the sun ever shone on. His head was of full human size, forming a frightful contrast with his height, which was considerably under four feet. It was thatched with no other covering than long matted red hair, like that of the fell of a badger in consistence, and in colour a reddish-brown, like the hue of the heather-blossom. His limbs seemed of

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great strength; nor was he otherwise deformed than from their undue proportion in thickness to his diminutive height. The terrified sportsman stood gazing on this horrible apparition until, with an angry countenance, the being demanded by what right he intruded himself on those hills and destroyed their harmless inhabitants. The perplexed stranger endeavoured to propitiate the incensed dwarf by offering to surrender his game, as he would to an earthly lord of the manor. The proposal only redoubled the offence already taken by the dwarf, who alleged that he was the lord of those mountains, and the protector of the wild creatures who found a retreat in their solitary recesses; and that all spoils derived from their death or misery were abhorrent to him. The hunter humbled himself before the angry goblin, and by protestations of his ignorance, and of his resolution to abstain from such intrusion in future, at last succeeded in pacifying him. The gnome now became more communicative, and spoke of himself as belonging to a species of beings something between the angelic race and humanity. He added, moreover, which could hardly have been anticipated, that he had hopes of sharing in the redemption of the race of Adam. He pressed the sportsman to visit his dwelling, which he said was hard by, and plighted his faith for his safe return. But at this moment the shout of the sportsman's companion was heard calling for his friend, and the dwarf, as if unwilling that more than one person should be cognisant of his presence, disappeared as the young man emerged from the dell to join his comrade.

It was the universal opinion of those most experienced in such matters that, if the shooter had accompanied the spirit, he would, notwithstanding the dwarf's fair pretences, have been either torn to pieces or immured for years in the recesses of some fairy hill.

Such is the last and most authentic account of the apparition of the Black Dwarf.

NOTE 3, p. 287

There is a level meadow, on the very margin of the two kingdoms, called Turner's Holm, just where the brook called Crissop joins the Liddel. It is said to have derived its name as being a place frequently assigned for tourneys during the ancient Border times.

GLOSSARY

a', all.
abune, above.
ae, one.
aff, off.
again', against, until.
ain, own.
airn, iron.
ait, oat.
aith, oath.
ahint, behind.
amaist, almost.
an, if.
aneath, underneath.
anent, about.
anes, once.
antic, grotesque, ludicrous.
assoilzie, acquit, clear.
auld-farrant, sagacious, having the wisdom of age.
ava, at all, of all.
aweel, well.
awmous, alms.
awsome, awe-inspiring.

bairn, a child.
baith, both.
ban, curse.
bane, a bone.
bedesman, a poor man supported in a bedes-house and required to pray for the soul of its founder.
bedral, a sexton.
behued, was necessary.
bein, comfortable, well provided.
belyve, immediately.
ben, in, inside.
bent, the open country.
bicker, a wooden dish.
bide, wait, endure.
bigging, building.
billie, a brother, a comrade.
bink, a plate-rack.
bird, turn, whirl.
blink, a moment.

blithe, blythe, happy, glad.
blude, blood.
bode, bid, offer.
bodle, a copper coin worth one sixth of an English penny.
bogilly, haunted by hobgoblins.
bogle, a bogie.
bole, a window opening.
bonny, pretty, fine.
bonny-wawlies, toys, gewgaws.
bore, a hole.
bothy, a Highland hut.
bouk, bowk, bulk.
brae, a hillside.
branking, prancing.
brawly, well, cleverly.
braws, fine clothes.
breeks, trousers.
buck, push.
buick, buke, a book.
butter in the black dog's hause, anything hopelessly lost.

ca'd, called.
caduacs, casualties.
caller, fresh.
cankered, crabbed.
cannle, a candle.
canny, shrewd, sensible.
cantrip, a trick, a frolic.
capeechin, a Capuchin.
capper, copper.
car-cakes, small cakes baked with eggs, eaten on Shrove Tuesday.
carle, a fellow.
carlin, a witch.
cast, fate, lot, opportunity.
cateran, a Highland irregular fighting man, a marauder.
ca'-thro', an ado.
cauld, cold.
cautelous, cautious.
cavey, a hen-coop.
certie, faith!

GLOSSARY

- cess, a land-tax.
 chancy, lucky, safe.
 chare, do, perform.
 chiel, a young man.
 claith, cloth, clothes.
 clartier, dirtier.
 clashes, gossip.
 clattered, tattled.
 clavers, idle talk, nonsense.
 cleeds, clothes.
 clink down, clap down, put down sharply.
 clodded, hurled down, threw heavily.
 cloot, hoof, head of cattle.
 clouted, patched.
 coble, a small boat.
 cockit, stuck up.
 corbie, a crow, a raven.
 coronach, a lament for the dead.
 coupit, upset.
 cracking, gossiping.
 cracks, chats, news.
 crappit-heads, stuffed haddocks heads.
 crookit, crooked.
 crouselly, confidently.
 cruppen, crept.
 cullion, a coward, a poltroon.
 cummer, a gossip.
 curfuffle, excitement.
 curnie, a company, a band.
 cusin, a cousin.

 daffing, frolicking.
 daft, crazy, wild.
 dammer and sinker, a miner.
 dandering, daundering, sauntering.
 deals, boards.
 dee, do.
 deeing, dying.
 deil gae'd o'er Jock Wabster, every-thing was ruined.
 democraws, democrats.
 devvel, a stunning blow.
 dinna, do not.
 dooms, very, exceedingly.
 door-pin, a latch.
 dour, sour, stubborn.
 dourlach, a quiver.
 dowed, was able.
 downa, cannot, do not like.
 drave, drove.

 dreeing, enduring.
 dreeping, dripping.
 drinking the dirge, sharing in a funeral feast.
 drucken, drunk.
 dune, done.

 earded, buried.
 een, eyes.
 e'enow, just now.
 effeir, belong to.
 eithly, easily.
 eneugh, enough.
 exies, hysterics.

 fae, who.
 fa'en, fallen.
 fair-strae, natural.
 fallow, a fellow.
 fan, when.
 fand, found.
 fanever, whenever.
 farl, a fourth part.
 fary, very.
 fash, trouble.
 fat, what.
 faulded, folded.
 fause, false.
 feck, a quantity.
 feckless, feeble.
 feel-body, a foolish person.
 fere, sound, well.
 fiar, one who holds the reversion of property.
 fickle, a puzzle.
 fireflaught, fireflash, lightning.
 fit, a foot.
 fite, white.
 flee, a fly.
 flightering, fluttering.
 fliskmahoy, a flirt.
 flit, pass, pass away.
 flung, deceived, disappointed.
 flyting, scolding.
 forfairn, worn out.
 forfoughten, exhausted, breathless.
 forrit, forward.
 foundered, stunned.
 frae, from.
 freer, a friar.
 fugie-warrants, warrants for preventing the flight of a debtor.

GLOSSARY

fule, a fool.
fund, found.

gaberlunzie, a beggar.
gadso, a mild oath.
gaed, went.
gait, way.
gane, gone.
gang, go.
gars, makes.
gash, shrewd.
gathering peat, the piece of peat left
to keep the fire alive.
gear, goods, property.
gecked, mocked, taunted.
gey, very, considerably.
ghaists, ghosts.
gie, give; gieing, giving.
gin, if.
gird, a girth.
girnel-kist, a corn-bin.
glaves, swords.
gleg, keen, sharp.
gliff, fright.
glower, glare, stare.
gousty, ghostly.
gowd, gold.
gowks, fools.
graping, groping, searching.
greet, weep.
grice, a sucking pig.
grit, great.
grumach, ugly.
grund, the ground.
gudeddaughter, daughter-in-law.
gudemither, mother-in-law.
gyte, out of one's senses.

haddies, haddock.
haet, an atom.
haill, hale, the whole, all.
halie, holy.
hallan, a partition.
harns, brains.
har'st, harvest.
haud, hold.
hause, the throat.
havered, talked at random.
hellicat, a wicked creature, giddy.
henker, a hangman.
heugh, a crag.
hinney, honey.

hollin, holly.
houdie, a midwife.
house-riggin, the ridge-pole.
howe, a hoe.
howks, digs.
hurchin, a hedgehog.
hurling, whirling, rushing.

ilka, each.
ill-fa'ard, unprepossessing.
ingans, onions.
ingle, the fire, a fireplace.
in-ower, within.
I'se, I will.
ither, other.

jaoused, suspected.
jeedging, judging, thinking.
jeest, just.
jimp, scarcely.
jinking in, darting in suddenly.
jocolate, chocolate.
jookery-paukery, jugglery, trickery.
jowing, rolling.

kame, a comb.
keelyvine, kylevine, a lead-pencil.
keepit, kept.
kemping, striving.
kend, knew, known.
kent, a long staff.
kerne, a light-armed soldier.
key, a quay, a wharf.
kilt, tuck up, go lightly, hang.
kimmer, a gossip, a neighbour.
kirk, church.
kist, a chest.
kittle, ticklish.
knave, a boy.
knockit, knocked.
knowe, a knoll.
kye, kine, cows.

laith, loath.
land-louper, an adventurer.
langer, longer.
lap, leaped.
lauch, law.
lave, the rest.
leddy, a lady.
leg-bail, to take, to run away.
leglin, a milkpail.

GLOSSARY

lickit, struck.
 lift, to lift up the coffin at the beginning of a funeral.
 likit, liked, loved, pleased.
 loan-head, the end of a lane.
 loom, a utensil, a tool.
 loon, a clown.
 lound, calm.
 loup, leap.
 louping-ill, a leaping disease that affects sheep.
 lug, an ear, a handle.
 lunt, a torch, a match.
 lykewake, a watch over the dead, at night.

maen, moan, lament.
 mair, more; mair by token, especially.
 maist, most.
 maun, must.
 merk, a Scotch coin worth 1s. 1½d.
 mettle, courage, resolution.
 mum, quiet, demure.
 minnie, mother.
 mirk, dark.
 mislippen, suspect.
 misset, put out, disturb.
 mote, a hillock.
 moulds, moulds, sod.
 muckle, much, great.

nae, no.
 nain, own.
 nane, none.
 neb, a nose.
 neist, next.
 neuk, a nook, a corner.
 nevoy, a nephew.
 nicker, giggle.
 niffered, haggled, exchanged.

oe, a grandson.
 onstead, a farmstead.
 ony, any.
 orra, odd, occasional.
 out-ower, outside.
 out-taken, excepted.
 overlay, a neckcloth.
 ower, over; ower far in, too intimate.
 owerby, a little distance away.
 owertaen, overtaken.

palin'-thing, a place inclosed with pickets.
 palmering, wandering.
 parritch, porridge.
 partans, crabs.
 pat, put.
 peengin, whining.
 peer, equal.
 periapt, a charm.
 pibroch, a series of variations for the bagpipes.
 pictarnie, the great tern.
 pinch, a crowbar, a lever.
 pinners, part of a headdress for women.
 pirn, a reel.
 pit, put.
 pith, energy, heart.
 pliskie, a trick.
 pluff, a powder puff.
 pock, a bag, a sack.
 pockmanky, a portmanteau.
 poinder, distraint of property for debt.
 pose, a secret hoard.
 pousowdie, a miscellaneous mess.
 pouting, potting, shooting.
 pow, a head.
 powny, a pony.
 powther, powder.
 prent buke, a printed book.
 propine, a gift.
 pu', pull.
 puir, poor.
 putted, drove.

quaigh, queich, a drinking-cup.
 quean, a wench, a young woman.

rae, a roe.
 rant, merrymaking.
 rasp-house, a prison.
 rath, early, sudden.
 ratton, a rat.
 red wud, stark mad.
 redd, arrange, advise.
 reist, refuse to go on.
 reiver, a robber.
 rickle, a heap.
 rin, run.
 riving, rending, tearing.
 rizzared, grilled, dried in the sun.

GLOSSARY

rousted, rusted.
 routh, plenty.
 row, roll.
 rudas, rude, stubborn.
 rugging and ryving, plundering.
 runds, strips of list or selvaige.

sackless, innocent.
 sae, so.
 saft, soft.
 sain, bless.
 sair, sore, very much.
 sall, shall.
 sauld, sold.
 saulies, hired mourners.
 scauld, scold.
 scaur, a crag, a bluff.
 scomfish, suffocate, stifle.
 scouter, scorch, toast.
 scraugh, screech, shriek.
 scull, a fish-basket.
 sealgh, a seal.
 sea-maw, a sea-gull.
 seere, sure.
 semple, simple, common.
 shanks, legs.
 shaws, woods.
 sheeling, winnowing.
 shelty, a small horse.
 sheugh, a furrow, a ditch.
 shouthers, shoulders.
 shule, a shovel.
 sib, related by blood.
 sic, siccan, so, such.
 sidier, a soldier.
 simmer, summer.
 single soldier, a private soldier.
 sinsyne, since.
 skart, scratched.
 skeely, skilful.
 skirl, a shriek.
 skirling, screaming.
 skreigh, screech, shriek.
 skreigh o' morning, dawn.
 slap-bason, slop-bowl.
 snecked, latched.
 sneeshin-mull, a snuff-box.
 snell, severe.
 snooded, having the hair bound with
 a fillet.
 soft road, a road through bogs.
 sort, arrange.

sough, sigh.
 souther, solder.
 sowdered, soldered.
 sownder, a young boar.
 speed, give success.
 speerings, tidings.
 squared, adjusted, accommodated.
 stane, a stone.
 stang, a long pole.
 steeking, shutting, stitching.
 steer, touch, disturb, rouse.
 steery, disturbance, tumult.
 steever, stiffer, firmer.
 sting and ling, entirely, altogether.
 stoup, a pitcher, a drinking-vessel.
 straits, strokes, blows.
 strake, struck.
 streekit, stretched.
 strengths, strongholds.
 stude, studden, stood.
 suld, should.
 sune, soon.
 swarv't, swooned.
 swither, confusion, perplexity.
 syne, since.

tackle, an arrow.
 tae, the one.
 taes, toes.
 tale-pyet, a telltale.
 Tammie Norie, a puffin.
 tane, the one.
 tap, the top.
 tartan, a chequered cloth.
 tauld, told.
 tawpie, a foolish young woman.
 taxed-cart, a two-wheeled open cart,
 drawn by one horse.
 tent, probe.
 thack and rape, thatch and rope,
 complete covering.
 thae, those.
 thegither, together.
 thir, these.
 three-nookit, three-cornered.
 threeps, insists.
 through-stane, a gravestone.
 thrum, tell repeatedly.
 tiernach, chief.
 till, to; an unproductive clay.
 tinkler, a tinker.
 tirling, uncovering, twirling.

GLOSSARY

tolbooth, a prison.
toom, empty.
trig, trim, neat.
trimmer, a vixen.
troke, traffic.
trow, trust, believe.
tuck, beat.
tuilzie, a quarrel, a scuffle.
tup, a ram.
twa, two.
twal, twelve.

unco, strange, very.
upbye, up yonder.
uphauld, uphold, support.
use, custom.

vivers, victuals.

wad, would; a pledge.
wale, pick, choice.
wampishes, throws around.
wanle, active.
wark, work.
warlock, a wizard.
wared, spent.
warp, four.
wat, wet.
wauking, waking.
waur, worse.

weans, children.
weary, vexatious; weary fa', a curse on.
weel, well, welfare.
weird, fate, destiny.
wha, who.
whatna, what not.
whaup, a curlew.
wheen, a few.
whiddin', moving quickly.
whiles, sometimes.
whinger, a hanger, a knife, or sword.
whombled, whommled, overturned.
wilyard, wild, unmanageable.
win, gain, get.
wind us a pirn, make us trouble.
worricows, hobgoblins.
wowf, crazed.
wrang side of the blanket, illegitimate.
wud, mad.
wussed, wished.
wyte, blame.

yauld, alert.
ye, yourself, yea.
yerl, an earl.
yett, a gate
yowe, a ewe.

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